

DOCTRINAL TEACHING/PREACHING
AN ESSENTIAL ELEMENT IN
BUILDING RELATIONSHIP
WITH GOD

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ABSTRACT

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This project examined the impact of the teaching/preaching of doctrines in building of a relationship with God on the Ethan Temple Seventh-day Adventist Church. It sought to demonstrate that doctrinal teaching/preaching is vital to the development of a relationship with God. The project engaged participants in the teaching of six doctrinal lessons. After presenting the studies, students were evaluated to ascertain if any change in attitude occurred. The methodology utilized to achieve this goal was a pre and post test. The results showed that the teaching/preaching of doctrine is important for building a relationship with God.

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DEDICATION

To Daphne King my mother, and Carl Willis Johnson, my brother-in-law, who are resting in Christ and are awaiting the blessed hope of the resurrection.

INTRODUCTION

The teaching/preaching of doctrine is the essence of this ministry project. Doctrinal teaching/preaching has always held a focal position in the Seventh-day Adventist Church; so much so, that many have complained that it occupied such a dominant role that it was counter-productive, in the sense that it led to boredom. Many parishioners believe that the teaching/preaching of doctrine is negative, controversial, and most important unrelated and irrelevant to the development of a relationship with God. It is out of this milieu that this project was conceived.

This project is intended to show that doctrinal teaching/preaching is not only rooted in church history, but that it is intrinsically and inextricably bound to the development of a relationship with God, and that when it is presented correctly, attitudinal changes in regard to its usefulness and relevance can be achieved.

Over an extended period of time, this writer researched the importance of doctrinal teaching/preaching. Included in this document is a study which took many months to develop, implement, and evaluate. The results will reveal that the teaching/preaching of doctrines and the development of a relationship with God are inter-related.

Chapter One, Ministry Focus, delineates the need for doctrinal teaching/preaching, and it gives a rationale for the basis of this study. This chapter also presents the context in which the study originated and how the background and professional

teaching/preaching skills of the researcher help inform the need for doctrinal teaching/preaching. Mention will also be made of the dynamics that operate in church culture, where little theological understanding thrives.

Chapter Two, the State of the Art in Ministry Model, makes reference to the literary resources, limited mainly to doctrinal teaching/preaching, administration, and leadership. The reviews cover a wide range of information from authors who have contributed extensively to the topic.

Chapter Three, the Theoretical Foundation, gives a detailed overview of the historical, biblical and theological justification of this study.

Chapter Four, Methodology, presents the model utilized in the project. The research method includes the teaching of six Bible lessons with a pre-test and post-test questionnaire.

Chapter Five, Field Experience, describes the implementation of the project, the methods used to collect, analyze and evaluate the data.

To conclude, Chapter Six, Reflection, Summary and Conclusion, presents the writer's final thoughts and summary.

CHAPTER ONE

MINISTRY FOCUS

There is a need to define doctrinal teaching/preaching. The confusion that exists concerning doctrinal teaching/preaching and its efficacy demands a concise description. Currently, the church has been embroiled in debates as to the necessity and the relevance of this type of communication of the Gospel. Questions such as, does doctrinal teaching/preaching have a place in our contemporary and technologically advanced society? Is it not too controversial and as a result too negative? And how can one apply doctrinal teaching/preaching to matters of the heart?

The project that follows therefore will show that doctrinal teaching/preaching is not an enemy of appropriateness for today's culture and when presented correctly, it strengthens and cements a relationship with God.

The context of this ministry project is based in Dayton, Ohio. At the time of this project, the Church, Ethan Temple Seventh-day Adventist Church, was located in West Dayton, a densely populated area primarily of African Americans. The making of this community is a departure from fifty years ago when it was predominately white. The migration of the white population to the outer ring suburbs has resulted in urban decay, which is systemic in many Mid Western cities. Housing stock has aged considerably and boarded up residences are a common sight. The entire City of Dayton has been severely affected by the decline of its industrial base. Major manufacturing companies, Delphi,

General Motors, Reynolds and Reynolds, and NCR, have either downsized or relocated. This change in business operation has impacted the African American community, especially in terms of employment. These social changes mandate that Ethan Temple no longer market itself as a community-based church. Greater Dayton, which includes the metropolitan area, with an estimated population of 880,000 people, must become the field of ministry. Incidentally, some members already commute over fifty miles. To meet this expanding population and its needs, strategic plans have been designed to tackle this predicament.

In 1994, Ethan Temple purchased thirty acres of land in Trotwood, a northwest suburb of Dayton. It was decided that the church's location in Dayton was too restrictive. The church was located in a residential area, thus making it difficult for further expansion. The master plan cited four areas of development, namely, senior housing, a daycare center and school, and a new sanctuary. Phase one of the project began during the summer of 2007, with the construction of a new church building. This facility will allow easy access for our senior members, and provide parking for the members who commute long distances. Further development is anticipated with facilities for the youth being a major priority. There is a sense of expectancy and anticipation as plans for relocation are being finalized. The general sentiment expressed is that a new facility must be coupled with innovative programming and progressive strategies for spiritual growth and advancement. The term "spiritual growth and advancement" is expansive and lends itself to subjective interpretation. Therefore, in order to prevent any confusion in the writer's discussion of the spiritual growth of the members of Ethan Temple Seventh-day Adventist Church, he is limiting the definition to mean an understanding and application

of the fundamental beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist Church as are stated in the Church Manual. The ministry focus of this writer, therefore, is doctrinal teaching/preaching. It is the premise that through this means, the membership will benefit spiritually.

It is the writer's strong conviction that doctrinal teaching/preaching is one of the major pillars upon which spiritual development is nurtured. When it is ignored there is a dearth of authentic Christian maturity. The Pastoral Epistles repeatedly emphasize the absolute need for doctrinal teaching/preaching and its connection with Christian experience and the development of a relationship with God.

The writer's years of experience in teaching, and the church's need for instruction was an almost perfect match. The writer believes that his arrival in Dayton was indeed providential. Teaching/preaching has changed over the centuries and it is sometimes difficult to evaluate its effectiveness. This writer believes that subjective presentation of Scripture has superseded objectivity, which has resulted in a diminution or, worse yet, the elimination of theological content in teaching/preaching of the Word. The emphasis on practical discourses has led this author to conclude that many of the members display a serious deficiency in understanding cardinal Biblical truths.

Biblical references are replete with examples of the teaching/preaching of doctrine. The apostle Paul used doctrinal presentations to confront the church at Corinth. Jude, the brother of Jesus, argued that the early Christians should "contend for the faith," which could only be done if there were knowledge of the sound doctrine. The apostle John used doctrine as he resisted the Gnostics of his day, and Jesus Himself utilized theological reasoning to confound the Pharisees and Sadducees. He regularly used the

doctrine of Creation as is recorded in the book of Genesis to deal with contemporary issues in His day. Doctrine is as necessary to teaching/preaching as moisture and sunlight are to the growth of a plant. Deprivation of doctrinal teaching/preaching leads to the eventual death of spirituality.

Doctrinal teaching/preaching appears to have lost its appeal among contemporary congregations. Many reasons have been advanced to justify this deterioration. The following are of note: The word “doctrinal” is associated with “dogma” and “dogmatic” which elicit fear of legalism and authoritativeness. These run counter to the subjective presentation of biblical teaching/preaching which is so prevalent today. In addition, there is the emphasis of auto-praxis over orthodoxy.¹ This writer concurs with this position. Many members voice the opinion that doctrinal teaching/preaching is confrontational, divisive, and controversial. This opinion has, to a great degree, resulted in its unpopularity. Another criticism raised is that it is boring, negative, and irrelevant. These perceptions have led the congregation to miss an integral ingredient in the recipe for spiritual maturity. This writer believes that sound doctrine is necessary for spiritual growth, and it should not be detached from Christian development.

Historically, doctrinal teaching/preaching has been a major component of presenting truth to people. An examination of a variety of presentations and sermons from the early church fathers show that, Gregory of Nazianzus, for example, utilized and promoted doctrine.² The period of the Enlightenment and Modernism brought a reversal

¹ Kwabena Donkor, *The Role of the Statement of Beliefs and Creeds: Journal of Adventist Theological Society Vol. 16* (Spring-Autumn, 2005), 94.

² O. C. Edwards Jr., *A History of Preaching* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2004), 60—62.

in concentration on objective truth, however, evidence can still be found to substantiate the dissemination of doctrinal teaching/preaching.

Today, in what is generally called Postmodernism, there has been an observable trend towards teaching/preaching that de-emphasizes doctrine and conversely there is a concentration on positive themes and practical topics that relate to contemporary issues. Throughout history there has been this false dichotomy between doctrines versus practice.

The New Testament is satiated with examples of the use of doctrines included in presentations that were conveyed to the churches. The evidence will show that doctrinal teaching/preaching was used by the apostles. Interestingly enough, there was not a division between teaching/preaching and application. Instead, the former informed and served the basis for the latter. Romans, chapters 1–11, are without doubt an exposition of doctrine while Romans 12–16 is the practical application of that teaching.

As the writer surveys the decline of doctrinal teaching/preaching he believes that resurgence is necessary. This would recapture the prominent position it held in the New Testament period. Therefore this researcher proposes the utilization of doctrinal teaching/preaching for the development of spiritual maturity. It is a tried and tested method that has been authenticated throughout history. The hypothesis is that members will develop from childish and infantile Christians to more mature believers when the teaching/preaching of biblical doctrines are included in sermons. Doctrinal sermons are not uninteresting theological presentations. They are not mere academic discourses. Doctrinal teaching/preaching was instrumental in the establishment of the early church, its progress, and evangelization of its surroundings. Furthermore, it was definitely vitally

important to the spiritual growth of those who were brought from “darkness into . . . light.” 1 Pet. 2:9. Soil and moisture are essential if vegetation is to grow and produce fruit. Similarly, doctrinal preaching is fundamental to spiritual growth.

The research method for testing this hypothesis will involve giving a questionnaire to ascertain the level of understanding of the congregation, of the fundamental statements of beliefs—a pretest. This will be followed by a series of lessons on the fundamental beliefs after which a post test will be administered to evaluate the results.

CHAPTER TWO

THE STATE OF THE ART IN THIS MINISTRY MODEL

The writer researched widely in his quest for pertinent information that would shed light on the topic of this ministry project, that is, the teaching/preaching of doctrine. The material studied can be considered voluminous, however, after careful scrutiny, it was decided to include in this review the following titles summarized below. In addition, reviews of literature that dealt with Leadership, a component of this ministry tract are included.

The literature review, found in this chapter, shows that the author read and grappled with, and interacted with some of the relevant material needed for an understanding of the teaching/preaching of doctrine, and the characteristics required for church leadership and administration. Some autobiographical reviews are added, so as to demonstrate how some of the authors' studies developed and how discourses were presented.

***Doctrine That Dances, Bringing Doctrinal Preaching and Teaching to Life*— Robert Smith, Jr.**

Robert Smith, in his book, *Doctrine that Dances*, deals with the importance of preaching. His major contribution to this topic is that he links teaching/preaching of doctrine to the life of faith. To achieve this, Smith uses a series of metaphors and illustrations. The most notable is his use of the “doxological dances” and the “exegetical escort.” The former metaphor emphasizes that the teacher/preacher is not just a distant

expositor of Scripture; but that he must also be emotionally involved and in the latter advances that the presenter must lead or bring the listeners into the presence of God. The genius of this book is found in the weaving of the preparation and presentation by the preacher with the participation and response of the listeners. The case for the relevance of doctrinal teaching/preaching today is successfully outlined.

***From the Hood to the Hill*—Barry Black**

Barry Black, in his book *From the Hood to the Hill*, presents an inspiring narrative of his rise from an inner city to the halls of Capitol Hill. His story is a relentless march to excellence with no obstruction or barrier too difficult for him to overcome. This autobiography not only pictures the many obstacles he faced but it gives strategies as to how they can be overcome.

At the end of each chapter the author gives some practical lessons learned from each phase of his life's journey, which is filled with good advice to all and especially the preacher. The following vignettes: surprise people with spirituality; surprise people with love; surprise people with diligence; surprise people with impartiality; surprise people with moral courage; surprise people with integrity, and surprise people by maintaining a peaceful spirit are impressive.

An autobiography in and of itself, is a personal reflection of an author's journey through life, and it is difficult to contradict or dispute his odyssey, but the lessons learned and the experiences recounted, the obstacles overcome, the advice and counsel given are invaluable to the seeker and learner.

Spiritual Leadership—Henry and Richard Blackaby

As the title suggests, the authors emphasize spiritual leadership as opposed to leadership in general. Their stated aim is to lead people to follow God's agenda. In their quest to achieve this goal, they use several biblical examples, most notably Moses, Joshua, David and Abraham. They stress the struggles, and challenges that confronted these leaders as they realized God's call. This book was extremely helpful for it combined the call to leadership from God with the hard work and continuing effort needed to be a spiritual leader. This valuable recommendation contained therein, can lead one to become a better leader.

Developing the Leader Within You—John Maxwell

In the book *Developing the Leader Within You*, John Maxwell gives some basic principles as to how one may become a successful leader. Among his many views of what leadership is, the following were instructive: first, that leadership is influence and second, leadership and managing are not synonymous. The use of multiple illustrations allowed this reader to follow the principles enunciated. *Developing the Leader Within You* is very practical and as such contains many pointers that could be applied to all disciplines including ministry.

***Hermeneutics: Principles and Processes of Biblical Interpretation*
—Henry A. Virkler**

This publication was authored by Henry A Virkler, when he taught at the Psychological Studies Institute, Georgia. His goal was to produce a book that could be used as a text in which the principles of correct biblical, interpretation could be outlined.

In addition, he desired that these principles be applied to sermon preparation or personal Bible investigation. Invaluable information that gives the aspiring preacher the basic tools for correctly interpreting Scripture can be found within its pages.

***Preaching As a Theological Task – Word, Gospel, Scripture*—Thomas G. Long
and Edward Farley, Editors**

The intention of the editors is to pay homage to David Buttrick and his contributions to preaching. The material is arranged in three main categories; preaching the Word, preaching the Gospel, and preaching Scripture. These elements deal with analyzing preaching from a new perspective, since the traditional methodology of text, Gospel and context is being challenged today.

An interesting debate concerning the relationship between biblical studies and preaching was presented. Paul Wilson, a contributor to this topic, introduces his presentation with a question, “How are preachers to regard biblical studies and preaching?” He then attempts to give an answer by referring firstly to those who feel that the age of preaching from the biblical text has declined and secondly to those scholars who contend that biblical studies are still relevant to contemporary preaching.

Helpful insights on the relationship between current world conditions and preaching and how biblical studies and biblical interpretation guide them were demonstrated. However, one glaring weakness, like most books that are written by several authors, is that the flow is truncated and, as a result, it calls for careful reading.

Reaching Out Without Dumbing Down: A Theology of Worship for the Turn-of-the-Century Culture—Marva J. Dawn

Marva Dawn sets out to bring some sanity to the sometimes divisive discussion of worship styles—traditional versus contemporary. To achieve her stated goal of understanding culture and worship, and how to use the best tools available to nurture faith development and outreach, she not only analyzes the factors that led to a decline in worship, but she proposes several ways in which worship could be improved. Despite her wide reference to various authorities, it must be noted that she is mainly referring to worship in a liturgical setting, and therefore many of her suggestions and recommendations do not fit many other faith traditions. If one overlooks this bias, there is still a wealth of information that could be applicable to all who are concerned about worship as it obtains in churches today.

The Chapter entitled *Worship Ought to Kill Us: The Word* was of immense help. It buttressed the position that God should be the subject and object of preaching; a theme that appears to have lost some luster in today's preaching. The greatest strength of this book is that it contains some very helpful suggestions as to how to conduct and improve the worship service. This book was worth the read.

The Certain Sound of The Trumpet—Samuel D. Proctor

This book is a masterpiece. Although it deals with the topic of sermon preparation, it does not follow the outline of similar publications. It contains solid guidelines for sermon preparation in addition to illustrations, examples, and multiple figures of speech. The language used is enthralling and engaging. The volume covers all

the areas of building sermons in a simple and systematic way. This book was of immense help to this writer. It destroyed the myth that preaching is an easy endeavor.

***The Divine Art of Preaching*—Carlyle Haynes**

This volume is intended to improve the preaching skills of the preacher. To achieve this goal, the author discusses a wide spectrum of the art of preaching. The author is adamant that delivering the Word is the first work of the preacher and that every effort should be made to ensure that he/she becomes proficient and effective in proclaiming the Good News. His treatment of preaching is extensive and covers areas such as voice training, family life, preparation, and time management.

Although this book was copyrighted in 1939, the principles outlined are relevant today. There is a lot to be gleaned from the great preachers of the last century. This book is one filled with practical information that this author found insightful and extremely useful.

***Preaching Christian Doctrine*—William J. Carl III**

There is no ambiguity in the writing of this book. The author succinctly states that its purpose is to present a systematic approach to doctrinal preaching. His contention is that all Christian preaching is doctrinal. The author precisely reviews some of the presentations of Augustine, Luther, Calvin, among others, to show that they all utilized doctrinal preaching. The book provides invaluable information for any study relating to the preaching of doctrine.

Doctrine: Systematic Theology Vol. 2—James Wm. McClendon, Jr.

This volume which is based on the premise that what the church teaches affects the ethics of its members was written twenty years after volume I, a volume which discussed ethics and how Christians ought to live as the church.

McClendon connects the relationship between orthodoxy and orthopraxy, which is indeed refreshing. This indeed is a remarkable position since many Christian writers today have drawn a line of demarcation between doctrine and practice. The oft heard and oft repeated cry that doctrine is irrelevant to Christian lifestyle was clearly debunked in this book. The major themes of eschatology, salvation, creation, the Holy Spirit and the identity of Christ, which were discussed, were well integrated with lifestyle issues. Inestimable help was obtained from the reading of this publication.

Guard The Truth—John Stott

This written commentary of 1 Timothy and Titus is more than a verse-by-verse study. John Stott in his own indomitable way shows how these two letters written centuries ago are still relevant to Christians today. He argues that there is objective truth, which runs counter to the postmodern claims of rationalism. He states clearly that there is truth worth fighting for, hence the title, *Guard the Truth*. The chapter entitled Apostolic Doctrine was helpful in that it traced the development of New Testament doctrine.

Some information was added to the debate on the need for doctrine. John Stott strongly puts forth the case that there is truth that needs to be preserved and transmitted to future generations, hence the need for the teaching/preaching of doctrine.

***With Head and Heart*—Howard Thurman**

Howard Thurman's autobiography entitled "With Head and Heart" aptly describes the life of a great spiritual leader. Thurman was born in segregated Daytona Beach, Florida, in 1900, and despite many racial, social and economic hindrances he graduated from Morehouse College, and Colgate-Rochester Divinity School in New York. This work chronicles his life's journey, and it reveals, as the title intimates, the relationship between the outward experience of social enterprise with the inward life of passion, emotion, and spirituality. This writer strongly agrees with Thurman's thesis that changes in society will be accomplished through the interaction between social action and spiritual discipline.

The contents of the book affected the writer on a personal level; there is the tendency today to stress the religion of the heart over academic theology, the head. This has resulted in an aversion to, and strong dislike for, biblical theology. Thurman, in his autobiography, has successfully shown that both head and heart are necessary for a successful ministry. He has strengthened the writer's resolve to include these components in ministry.

***A History of Preaching*—O. C. Edwards, Jr.**

The sheer size of this book is intimidating. The 879 pages are filled with a wide array of material, including primary sources. As the title of the book suggests, the author is concerned about how preaching has been presented over the past 2000 years. To avoid ambiguity, he specifically states his thesis lucidly, and sets the parameters for inclusion

and discussion in this volume. According to the author, he was more interested in preaching than in preachers. He focuses less on personalities and more on the mechanism of homiletics. Although his aim is clearly demonstrated, he cannot completely avoid reference to some of the established preachers associated with each era he discussed.

It is obvious that the book is written from a mainline Protestant perspective where many liberal tendencies dominate. The time spent in reading this book was worthwhile.

CHAPTER THREE

THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

Historical Foundation

Historically, doctrine did not operate in a vacuum. It is clear that certain conditions and events impacted its development. The need for doctrine arose from various situations. McGrath, in his book the *Genesis of Doctrine* identifies several different needs that motivated the statement of doctrines. He writes:

Conflict is inherent within the tradition concerning Jesus: that tradition does not merely *generate* conflict but *transmits* it as an essential constituent element. As controversy flared further within the early church, it became clear that the deliberate critical reworking of the Christian tradition and its transmitted conflicts was both necessary and inevitable.¹

This resulted in what he calls “something more threatening and challenging—the formulation of doctrine.”² According to McGrath, the need for resolving the conflicts that arose in the early church about articulating the identity and significance of Jesus was important in the necessity for doctrines.

¹ Alister E. McGrath, *The Genesis of Doctrine* (Oxford, UK: Basil Blackwell, Inc., 1990), 3.

² Ibid.

A second situation was the difficulty of reconciling Scripture with the position held by Greek philosophy. The following statement supports this argument:

There was thus a tendency to fuse the scriptural idiom concerning God with the classical philosophical theistic conventions. The data of scripture and the Christian tradition were thus interpreted in the light of presuppositions, within a hermeneutical framework, alien to their sources. After all, Greek metaphysics had developed the idea of 'a god' before its encounter with Christianity, with the result that the proclamation of the God of Jesus Christ in this milieu involved somewhat tortuous negotiations with this metaphysical god, leading to a complex and nuanced history of identifications and differentiations.³

Another need for the development of doctrine can be derived from McGrath's contention that Christian beliefs and traditions must be transferred to the present and future generations:

Finally, it may be noted that 'tradition' means something which is handed *over*, as much as handed *down*. It is not that the past has been deposited upon our laps, like some unwanted family heirloom which we would rather do without—it is that we have been given *responsibility* for receiving, evaluating and transmitting the christologically concentrated heritage of the past to the future. Responsibility for the contextualization and transmission of the kerygma has been transferred from the past to the present. We have been *authorized* to transfer the kerygma from the limiting conditions of the past, and locate it in the historical situation in which we now find ourselves. The doctrinal heritage of the past is thus both a gift and a task, an inheritance and a responsibility. What our forebears in the Christian faith passed down to us must be appropriated, in order that we may wrestle with it within our own situation, before passing it on to those whose day has yet to dawn.⁴

³ Ibid., 5.

⁴ Ibid., 200.

John H. Leith argues that the emergence of false teaching, heresy and the need for catechetical teachings was another reason for the need of the development of doctrine. In his book *Basic Christian Doctrine* he writes:

... heresy—false teaching – is a fact that often endangers the very existence of the Christian community. This is amply demonstrated in the quantifiable facts of church life. The Christian tradition is that which the church believes, confesses, and teaches as well as the practices that these actions entail and the fellowship they create. The boundaries of tradition are hard to define, but the central core is clear enough.⁵

He continues to stress the role of doctrine with the following words:

The first task of theology is always to maintain the integrity of the faith itself. The second task is to explicate the faith in an intelligible way so that believers may understand and unbelievers may be convinced. Theology always works for the intelligibility of faith itself and the intelligibility of human life and experience in the world in the light of that faith.

The second development in the ancient church that called for theology was baptism and catechetical instruction. Catechetical instruction has always been more than receiving doctrines and then learning them. Every doctrine raises questions that must be answered. Every doctrine must be understood with the mind as well as accepted by the heart, and this requires explication.⁶

This author agrees with the position that doctrine was needed especially in the early church to defend the Christian faith from an array of attacks that threatened to distort and or destroy the teachings of the church. A constant battle had to be waged against false teachings and heresy. In addition, this author strongly contends that doctrinal teaching/preaching is needed to receive, evaluate, and transmit the truths to the

⁵ John H. Leith, *Basic Christian Doctrine* (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993), 17.

⁶ Ibid., 18.

Christian community. The explication, examination or investigation, of the beliefs of the church is needed so that they can be understood especially for evangelistic purposes.

The period following the death of the apostles saw the rise of many doctrinal arguments and debates, the effects of which have continued to linger to the present day, for example, what is Revelation and Inspiration? How do they operate in the Christian's life? And how they affect biblical interpretation? The Doctrine of the Godhead, the Doctrine of Man, and the Doctrine of sin, soteriology, ecclesiology and eschatology have in their own realms generated heated debates throughout the history of the church. The scope of material which has resulted is too extensive to be adequately examined in a limited study of the historical foundations of these areas treated in this paper. This author therefore will trace the brief chronological circumstances and events which arose that necessitated the development and statement of these doctrines.

The discussions of doctrines that follow all contain one common thread. This thread is the need to protect and defend the body of truths and faithfulness to God and His Word.

Doctrine of the Godhead

The doctrine of the Godhead also referred to as the Trinity, has generated extensive volumes of material. However, this writer will only make reference to the salient points of its development. Since the doctrine of God is fundamental to Christian theology, it, to a large degree, determines the subsequent body of Christian beliefs.

The first two centuries after the death of Christ, sometimes referred to as the period of the Church Fathers, saw the beginnings of doctrinal debates. However, this genesis cannot be divorced from the philosophical influences of Greek philosophers that

predated the Apostolic Fathers. Millard J. Erickson in his massive work of Christian

Theology supports this position when he writes:

Of all the disciples of human inquiry and knowledge, probably the one with which theology has had the greatest amount of interaction over the years of the history of the church is philosophy. . . . This overlap was particularly true in the history of philosophy before its many children left home.⁷

It is suggested then, that the Apostolic Fathers were influenced by the prevailing thought of the extra biblical thinkers that existed before them. Since the doctrine of the Godhead, and in particular the Trinity, was heavily influenced by philosophy, this writer will succinctly review the philosophical flow that was current at that time.

The Greek philosophers, Plato and Aristotle, provided fertile ground on which the Christian doctrine of the Godhead germinated. Plato in particular became a major contributor in the Apostolic Fathers' thought.⁸ Neo-Platonism, which is a syncretistic movement, brought together many times unsuccessful elements of the thoughts of Platonism, Pythagoreanism, Aristotleianism and the Stoicism, which in turn influenced Philo and Plutarch, who embraced Plato's two world theory.⁹ This simply stated, divided the universe into two realms, one heavenly and the other earthly, which were connected by intermediaries.¹⁰ These all influenced the later positions held concerning the nature and work of God.

⁷ Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1985), 39.

⁸ Raoul Dederen, Ed. *Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 2000), 140.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

Aristotle, a disciple of Plato, built on Plato's system; however, he varied on the position of God's form. William Sahakian summarizes the Aristotelian philosophy of God with these words:

God as pure form or pure act, is perfect, that is he wants nothing, does not need to perfect or actualize himself, being fully perfected or completely actualized. . . God is the unmoved mover, who motivates the universe as its course designer and purpose. . . God's activity consists of thought, the activity of the mind.¹¹

Aristotelianism, however, had a greater effect on medieval theology. The review of the influence of Plato and Aristotle is important for it greatly affected the concept of God, as was espoused during the Patristic Period.

The development of the Doctrine of the Trinity was not a conscious attempt at formulating a specific teaching. A review of the major contributors and their contributions to this topic reveal that there was no effort to systematize, expound or explain a doctrine of the Trinity. Millard Erickson supports this when he contends that,

During the first two centuries there was little conscious attempt to wrestle with the theological and philosophical issues of what we now term the Doctrine of the Trinity.¹²

Justin Martyr who lived c100–c165, in his writings made references to God in terms of the divine Logos, which is the divine reason in the world.¹³ By emanation-generation the Logos was brought into being by the Father's will sometime before creation, and again that the Logos and not God was incarnated in Jesus Christ.¹⁴ Irenaeus

¹¹William S. Sahakian, *History of Philosophy* (New York, NY: Harper Collins Publishers, 1968), 70.

¹² Erickson, 332.

¹³ Owen Chadwick, *A History of Christianity* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1995), 55.

¹⁴ Dederen, 141.

of Lyons is remembered for his influential five volume treatise *Against the Heresies*. He was mainly concerned with Gnostic heresies, however, one can cull from his writings that he stressed God as creator and executor of his creation. This was a shift from the emphasis on the nature of God.¹⁵ Bernhard Loshe posits that the doctrine of God gained some traction towards the end of the second century, and he credits Irenaeus with developing what later became the foundation for the Trinity doctrine. The following quotation supports his contention:

Only toward the end of the second century was greater clarity introduced into the doctrine of God. Of importance here was first of all, Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyons. First he spoke of God's inner being and secondly his progressive self disclosure in the history of salvation. . . In this way Irenaeus developed the basic features of a doctrine of the Trinity.¹⁶

Tertullian of Carthage added to the continuing development of the Doctrine of the Trinity by contributing terminology that gave expression to the unity of God.¹⁷ Irenaeus and Tertullian therefore were the first to sketch an outline of what is now referred to as the doctrine of the Trinity. They did not just simply describe the three persons of the Godhead singularly, but they projected the idea of the unity of the three. However, the Son is subordinated to the Father, and the Holy Spirit to the Son.

Origen's writings, especially *On First Principles* contain an attempt to put together a systematic approach to theology. He has received highest praise from many authors who consider him to be in the league of giants like Augustine and Thomas

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Bernhard Loshe, *A Short History of Christian Doctrine* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1985), 44.

¹⁷ Ibid., 45.

Aquinas.¹⁸ He, more than any of the Patristic Fathers before him, tried to define a well thought out position of God and the Trinity. He devised, as Dederen calls it, the idea of eternal generation, which meant that the Son is timelessly generated by the Father, and that the Holy Spirit, though a part of the unity of the Trinity, was below the position held by that of the Son.¹⁹

Origen's position was a reaction to Monarchianism, which stated that Jesus was just a man who was taken up into the Godhead, and that Jesus and the Holy Spirit were modes or functions of God.²⁰ He continues to propose his teaching of the Trinity, in which the term *homoousia* is injected, although he continues the concept of three persons. This means that the Son is seen as created by the Father. Origen's conclusions opened the door for two possible trends of thought, that of Arianism or Orthodoxy.²¹

A summary of the thoughts of the three Patristic fathers reviewed above reveals that there was no real intent by Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, or Origen to develop a doctrine of God. It would appear that as the need arose, they responded to the discussions of their day. Allister McGrath argues that the formulation of doctrine flowed out of the desire to defend the church from heresies which is the next step in the development of the Doctrine of the Trinity.²²

¹⁸ Edwards Jr., 32.

¹⁹ Dederen, 142.

²⁰ Loshe, 45.

²¹ Ibid., 47.

²² Allister E. McGrath, *Understanding Doctrine* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1990), 60.

The period between the second and fourth centuries saw a more serious attempt to deal with the teaching concerning the Trinity. This, however, resulted in what could be called the Trinitarian Heresies. The most contentious of these was Arianism. Owen Chadwick succinctly describes the Arian Controversy by writing the following:

Arius, priest of Alexandria, taught that Christ, though the unique Son of God and Logos, was like the Father in everything; so he tended to turn the Trinity into three Gods, which the churches . . . never accepted. Most of the controversy was not about this, but about what language you could rightly use to show that it was wrong.²³

This writer admits that this quotation is rather simplistic, because there were many involved arguments that still remain to this day. However, it is useful in the brief historical study of the development of doctrine in the early church.

Arianism proved to be the first major threat to the early Christian church because it was a more systematic theological construct of the relationship between God and Jesus, and as a consequence, it had an excellent chance of becoming accepted as the position of Christians.²⁴ The debate that ensued around Arius' position led to the first ecumenical council to combat what was regarded as a threat. The debate that resulted centered on the contention that the Son of God was a creature and was not from eternity, and therefore, he could not possess divinity. This culminated in the excommunication of Arius, and the gathering of the church leaders at Nicaea.

The Council of Nicaea, which met in the city of Nicaea in 325, formulated for the first time a statement that clearly annunciated the divinity of Christ and sets forth his

²³ Chadwick, 287.

²⁴ Erickson, 695.

relationship to God the Father. This response to Arius, now commonly referred to as the Nicene Creed reads in part:

We believe . . . In one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, begotten of the Father, only begotten that of the substance of the Father, God of God, Light of Light, true God of true God, begotten not made, of one substance of the Father. . . ²⁵

McGrath, in commenting on this creed observes that:

In its effort to insist upon the reality of the divinity of Jesus Christ, this creed speaks of Jesus as ‘being of one substance with the Father.’ It includes important amplifications of the Christian doctrine both of the person of Christ and of the Work of the Holy Spirit.²⁶

The Council of Nicaea, dealt with the doctrine of God and what is now referred to as the Trinity. It affirmed the divinity of Jesus, spells out His relationship to the Father, and in a glancing way, it mentions the Holy Spirit. This creed soundly denounced Arianism; however, it survived, in part, up to the fifth Century while opposing schools mainly in Alexandria and Antioch persisted in debating the humanity and divinity of Christ. As a result of this continuing discussion, Apollinaris, Nestorius and Eutyches presented opposite and conflicting positions, which led to the convening of a council at Chalcedon in 451. This council was called to settle the divisive issue of the nature of Christ. After many meetings it was agreed that Jesus Christ was both divine and human.²⁷

In 381 at the council of Constantinople, the Arian controversy was brought to an end, and the divinity of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit was confessed.

²⁵ The Nicene Creed, www.spurgeon.org/~phil/creeds/nicene.htm (accessed October 12, 2008).

²⁶ McGrath, 122.

²⁷ The Date in History: Council of Chalcedon, www.atheism.about.com/library/glossary/western/bldef-councilchalcedon.htm (accessed October 12, 2008).

Although the Arian controversy was considered to be officially over, there was still some further development in the doctrine of the Trinity, advanced by Augustine. In his theology, Augustine is specifically interested in the Unity of God. He emphasizes the terminology 'relation' and seems to prefer "persons" when referring to the Godhead. This position according to Loshe becomes:

. . . normative for the Western doctrine of the Trinity, which consequently places more emphasis on the unity of the persons while Eastern theology develops its doctrine of the Trinity by beginning with the divinity of the Father . . . although it maintains the *homoousia* of the Son and of the Holy Spirit with the Father.²⁸

This writer sees doctrine as a necessary component in the presentation of God's Word. This development of the doctrine of God up to the year 500 as was reviewed above shows that the concentration on doctrine provided the church with clear positions that protected it from heresies and false teachings. In this writer's view, the teaching of doctrine is authenticated by its purpose and use in the development of Christianity. This will be further amplified as the Medieval Period is now considered.

The period designated as the Patristic Period by this writer covered more than the usual line of demarcation which is generally set around 300. This was done to accommodate the major Creeds which were settled by 500. The dominate reasons for doctrinal debates and discussions were to combat heresies and to help solidify the church and its beliefs, which distinguished it from the many other groups and their competing teachings, for example, Gnosticism. However, with the passing of this period, the mix of societal changes impacted the role of doctrine.

²⁸ McGrath, 60.

Allister McGrath forcefully argues that the conversion of Constantine in 313 had a major impact on the Church. According to him:

Under the edict of Milan AD 313, Christianity assumed a new status as the religion of the Roman Empire, eventually leading to the development of medieval “Christendom”. The Roman Empire was officially Christian, and there was no longer any need to distinguish Christians from their neighbors. With this development doctrine lost its identity-giving functions. ‘Church’ and ‘Society’ were regarded as more or less the same thing. Doctrine was no longer of importance, in that Christianity no longer felt any need to distinguish itself from society. Society it was argued was Christian.²⁹

McGrath’s position may contain some element of historical fact, but this is not to be taken to be the death knell of doctrine, for the medieval period produced one of the greatest theologians of the church, whose influence is still prevalent today. Without doubt, Thomas Aquinas has left an indelible mark on the doctrinal discussions concerning the Doctrine of God, the doctrine chosen by this writer to trace and illustrate the historical development of doctrine.

Many theologians see a connection between Augustine and Thomas Aquinas. Augustine brought together the concept of the oneness of God. His writings, *Confessions on the Holy Trinity* and *The City of God* contain a framework of the Doctrine of God upon which Thomas Aquinas later elaborated. However, James Wm. McClendon warns that there were other factors that affected Aquinas, and the Platonic models of Augustine which were declining. He asserts that Thomas Aquinas, who was influenced by Albert

²⁹ Ibid.

the Great, who made the case that the Christian faith was to be made in Aristotelian terms.³⁰

McClendon supports his position when he writes that:

After several preliminary works, Thomas Aquinas made his Aristotelian case in an apologetic *Summa contra Gentiles*, and then turned to the systematic unfolding of the faith in the *Summa Theologiae* (later called *Summa Theologica*). Here the Aristotelian influence continued to show itself. After establishing its task (“the fundamental aim of holy teaching is to make God known”), Thomas set out in the three Parts of *Summa Theologiae* to treat God, the journey to God, and Christ who is the road for the journey. Meantime, he continued to write extensive commentaries on the Bible while teaching and preaching without interruption.³¹

Aquinas posits that God’s existence is not self-evident, although it may be possible from the natural world to conclude that God exists. On this premise, he constructed five proofs that God exists. His volume entitled *Summa Theologiae* is considered to be a guide for a search of knowledge. Dederen sums up his contribution to the Doctrine of God by saying that “Aquinas’ views of God are attractive and coherent within the philosophical system he chose to follow.”³²

The names of scholastics like Duns Scotus, William Ocklam and Gabriel Biel can be added to the work of Aquinas. These all helped in defining the Doctrine of God. In spite of the work of these men, doctrinal debates were not as strident as before. The State controlled religion and the resultant stability led to a lack of interest in doctrine. This

³⁰ James W. McClendon, *Doctrine: Systematic Theology Vol. 2* (Nashville TN: Abingdon Press, 1986), 298.

³¹ Ibid., 299.

³² Dederen, 145.

state of affairs according to McGrath led to the turbulent debates that followed in the next period the Reformation.³³

Martin Luther and John Calvin dominated the Reformation period. Luther's basic position on the doctrine of God could be listed under the following headings. God's revelation is seen in Jesus, a God of love and justification. This aspect of God is seen, however, there is the hidden God of wrath, mystery and judgment. Luther did not have a systematic development of the Doctrine of God, instead his emphasis was on justification, from which deductions can be made to construct his thoughts of God. John Calvin's view on the doctrine of God includes God's timelessness, immutability and predestination. The Sovereignty of God became a major emphasis. The doctrinal teachings of God did not end with the Reformation period. Many more theological positions have emerged, but this writer intends to review them in the theological section of this research paper.

In this writer's view, the study and teaching of doctrines have always attended Christianity. Many of the discussions and debates were contentious and the after effects are still present today. History teaches that it is necessary to seek to ascertain truth and to defend it from ideas that may seek to distort it. This writer believes that even though a consensus may not always be achieved, the continuous search for positions on which Christians can agree must continue and this is where doctrinal studies and teaching play a role.

³³ McGrath, 60.

Doctrine of Man

The constant need for clear statements of beliefs in the early church was occasioned by the prevailing cultural atmosphere. A historical overview of the development of the Doctrine of Man will reveal this. The following quotation lends support to this position.

The Christian understanding of man was formed within the horizon of Hebrew thought and developed homogeneously in primitive Christianity. However, Christendom (which is a culture not to be confused with Christianity) originated as an Hellenization of the primitive experience, substituting another language and other logical instruments of interpretation and expression. . . ³⁴

Three presuppositions have emerged out of this environment, namely, Trichotomism, Dualism and Monism. Trichotomism is the view that man is composed of three parts or three elements, and according to Berkhof, this belief was popular among the Alexandrian fathers, including Clement, Origen and Gregory of Nyssa. It suffered when Apollinarius championed it as part of his Christology and it declined in popularity.³⁵ This position was considered heretical although it was revived in later theological constructs.³⁶

Dualism, which is the view that man is comprised of two elements, material, and immaterial, became the most commonly held belief by the fourth Century, and after the

³⁴ Dederen, 223.

³⁵ Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1953), 191, 192.

³⁶ Erikson, 521.

Council of Constantinople, it was generally accepted as a belief of the Church.³⁷

However, there is some dissent against this position.

Dederen made reference to the different beliefs on dualism enunciated by Justin Martyr, Origen in the Early church, Thomas Aquinas in the Middle Ages, Luther, Calvin, Milton and Tyndale in the Protestant Reformation and, quite recently, J.R. Stott, and Clark Pinnock.³⁸ These widely varying views give rise to the need for doctrinal statements.

Monism, on the other hand, insists that man is indivisible, a single unit. This position according to Erikson arose as a reaction against the immortality of the soul—A. T. Robinson being the foremost proponent.³⁹

The brief historical review of the development of the Doctrine of man in Christianity unquestionably shows the need for clearer doctrinal positions, for these different views are just not staid academic discussions, they have far-reaching consequences as to how man is characterized.

Once again, it is important to note that doctrinal statements were and are necessary to bring some consensus of beliefs on the major Christian themes. History is instructive not only because it allows one to trace the development of the debates, but it also reveals the circumstances that affected the discussions. In addition, in this case, the historical developments of the Doctrine of Man and the various conclusions have impacted other doctrines, for example the Doctrine of Sin.

³⁷ Ibid., 522.

³⁸ Dederen, 224, 225.

³⁹ Erikson, 526.

Doctrine of Sin

A historical overview of Doctrine of Sin is vital because it is linked to the Doctrine of God, the Doctrine of Man and to other teachings. As was noted previously, doctrines were formulated because of the various conflicting views that posed a threat to the Christian Church. The Doctrine of Sin covers a wide spectrum so to cover the historical scope; the author will mention only the five major periods that grappled with this doctrine.

The first major doctrinal dispute over the doctrine of Sin arose between Pelagius and Augustine. Pelagius 350-425 a British monk contended, among other beliefs, that man was born innocent and consequently free of depraved tendencies. His beliefs later called Pelagianism, was described as:

. . . a teaching about man's own choice, since human free will required an equipoise before right and wrong. . . Adam's sin was personal and therefore does not damn others.⁴⁰

This Teaching was considered heretical and it was condemned at the Synod of Carthage in 418. Augustine 354–430, who was the bishop of Hippo strongly disagreed with Pelagius and taught that 'original sin' contaminated humanity, not only Adam. These two dissenting views have continued over the years.⁴¹

The next step in the development of this doctrine can be traced to the Middle Ages, during which the debate concerning the Doctrine of sin escalated. The terminology

⁴⁰ T.C. O'Brien, *The Encyclopedic Dictionary of the Western Churches* (Washington, DC: Corpus Publications, 1970), 384.

⁴¹ Dederen, 260.

of mortal sin, a deliberate act that leads to loss of grace and venial sin, one that did not cause a loss of grace emerged. To this was added the position of Anselm of Canterbury (1033–1109) and Thomas Aquinas (1224–1274). The former developed the theory that sin was an offense against God and that satisfaction is required.⁴²

During the Reformation Period, different concepts concerning the Doctrine of sin circulated. Luther differed from the views prevalent in the Middle Ages. He disagreed with the differentiation between mortal and venial sin. Calvin taught hereditary depravity. Zwingli emphasized sin as rebellion against God whilst the Anabaptist concurred with Zwingli's position.⁴³

Once again as in the previous doctrines discussed, the occasion that gave rise to the need for doctrinal statements are consistent. Positions were advocated that appeared to contradict Scripture so corrections were needed. Positions were postulated and adjustments were made as more investigation and study were made. The writer believes that the Doctrine of sin is important for it forms a link between the doctrine of God and the destiny of man.

Doctrine of Salvation

Soteriology, the doctrine of Salvation, has had a long history. Therefore, a brief overview of the major historical periods in its development will be presented. The Early church Fathers taught the twin beliefs of faith in Jesus and repentance to God. Pelagianism advocated that salvation could be attained through personal effort. Augustine conversely believed in total depravity and as a result, the need for irresistible grace.

⁴² Ibid., 260.

⁴³ Ibid., 261.

During the Medieval Period, the Augustinians' position was followed but with few additions, for example, penance, and satisfaction. The Reformation Era saw a radical departure from the previously held beliefs. Luther emphasized justification, Calvin insisted on salvation of the elect, Arminius held to universal grace which was received by faith response, and John Wesley emphasized sanctification.⁴⁴

Ecclesiology

Ecclesiology, which is the study of church, according to T. C. O'Brien did not rise to a place of prominence in theology until the Reformation.⁴⁵ Before that period, the nature of the church was not a matter of major debate. The church was considered to be a group of people who were chosen by God. It was more of a spiritual society. However, the introduction of heresies makes it crucial for some external identification marks to be recognized. This led to the role and functions of bishops.⁴⁶ Further development led to the hierarchical judicial structure of the church that elicited such a strong reaction by the Reformers. The church is, according to the Reformers, is "a priesthood of believers," under the supervision of God.⁴⁷

⁴⁴ Introduction to the Study of Salvation, www.jsrhee.com/ST/SoteriologyIntro.htm (accessed October 20, 2008).

⁴⁵ T. C. O'Brien, 278.

⁴⁶ Dederen, 566.

⁴⁷ O'Brien, 389.

Eschatology

Eschatology, the doctrine concerned with last day events, has had a resurgence during the latter part of the Twentieth Century. The history of eschatology has gone through peaks and valleys. Historical citations are not prominent from the Church Fathers to the Reformation period. Allegorical interpretation of the Bible, and the prevailing political thought all caused a decline in eschatological teaching and preaching. It is not until the nineteenth century that an interest was rekindled.

The review of the major doctrines of the church shows a consistent theme. Originally there was no concerted attempt or effort to formalize any teaching, but the need arose when heresy infiltrated the church. Then it was necessary to clearly delineate clear teachings. Heresy is defined as “that which is ‘a choosing’ and hence an opinion . . . which lead to divisions.”⁴⁸ These opinions found their source from the philosophy of the day. This was the major reason why doctrines were more specifically defined. It is true that in the development of doctrine, many differences and nuances were circulated; however, this writer believes that there is much agreement in these major doctrines and that the historical review reveals that each doctrine was informed by the need to preserve the teachings of Jesus, transmit the Christian established beliefs of the past to the future, to maintain the integrity of the faith, to distinguish the Christian community from other competing groups, to keep the church faithful to its beliefs and, most importantly, to defend the faith against false teaching. The need for doctrinal teaching is epitomized in these words from Harry Emerson Fosdick, quoted by Robert Smith Jr. in his book

⁴⁸ W. E. Vine, *Vine's Concise Dictionary of Bible Words* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers), 177.

Doctrine that Dances, “The rebirth of Christian emphasis on doctrine is not first of all the Christian’s doing; our enemies have forced it on us.”⁴⁹ A fight which this author believes must be engaged.

Biblical

The belief that the Bible is a book of instruction and teaching is central to the Christian community. 2 Timothy 3: 16 say:

All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.⁵⁰

Both the Old Testament and New Testament give evidence of this position. A cursory review reveals that it is replete with references to doctrine/teaching, as well as with those persons who were engaged in this enterprise. The content is wide and covers many themes, topics and individuals. The following are some examples found in *Roget’s Thesaurus of the Bible*: God teaches individuals knowledge out of His law, Ps. 94:12. He instructs and teaches people (Isa. 28:26); God teaches more to people than He does to the beasts of the earth (Job 35:11). As a matter of fact, He instructs all His children (Isa. 54:13), and this begins from their youth (Ps. 71: 17). In addition to giving knowledge, God teaches guidance (Ps. 25:12) discernment Ps. 119:66), and humility (Ps. 25:9). Even sinners are not exempt from God’s instruction (Ps 25:9). The Spirit, as said by Nehemiah, was given to instruct the people (Neh. 9:20), and John said that the Holy Spirit would teach the disciples all things. (Matt. 21:23).

Jesus taught in the temple (Matt. 21:23), in the towns and villages (Mk, 4:1), from a boat (Mk 4:1), in synagogues (Matt. 4:23), from a mount (Matt. 5:1). His teaching

⁴⁹ Robert Smith Jr. *Doctrine that Dances* (Nashville, TN: B & H Publishing Group, 2008), 54.

⁵⁰ Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture references are taken from the King James Version.

content included prayer (Lk. 11:1), his suffering (Mk. 9:31), eschatology (Matt. 24: 1 – 51), and the resurrection (Matt.16:21).

Before the New Testament, others were involved in the teaching ministry, which included an array of topics. Joseph taught the elders wisdom (Ps. 105:22). Bezalel was inspired to teach others to do skillful work (Ex. 35: 34, 35), Levi taught Israel God's ordinances (Deut. 33: 10), Samuel instructed the way that is good (1Sam. 12:23), officials and priests are summoned to teach throughout all Judah (2Chro. 17:9), and Ezra taught the law (Ezra 7:10 – 25).

In the New Testament, the apostles taught the people (Acts 5:21). Paul expounded the word in Corinth (Acts 18:11) in public and in private (Acts 20:20). In the pastoral letters, elders (1Tim. 5:17), and older women are all admonished to teach and train others (Titus 2:4). Titus is counseled to speak sound doctrine (Titus 2:1), show purity in doctrine (Titus 2:7). Timothy is to attend to teaching (1Tim. 4:13), and the apostles were admonished to teach people to observe all that Jesus commanded.⁵¹

These are just a few instances of the many references concerning teaching that support the position that correct instruction is a part of the Biblical mandate. It is necessary at this juncture to note that the method of presentation varies among the many styles used; historical recitations, drama, poetry, narratives, music and prose predominate. However, these forms do not dilute or decrease the content. Instead they strengthen the positions advocated—the central of core for the purpose of the writing. This researcher believes that the instruments used do not darken or eclipse the intended meaning. The style of teaching/ preaching should not overpower the substance of the

⁵¹ A. Colin Day, *Roget's Thesaurus of the Bible* (Edison, NJ: Castle Books, 2003), 382–384.

message. To illustrate the use of teaching/preaching doctrine, this researcher has chosen from among the myriads of Biblical references, two passages: Psalms 78: 1- 8, and 1 Timothy 1:3 -11, as his scriptural foundation to show the importance of teaching/preaching doctrine.

Psalm 78: 1 – 8

Psalm 78 is the first of the “historical psalms”⁵² and as such “as the voice of a teacher, it is largely composed of a narrative, a telling of the story of the Lord’s way with Israel.”⁵³ Furthermore the purpose of this composition is to ensure that the worshippers learn a lesson. Mays emphasized this when he states that:

These Psalms are instructional in the broadest sense of that term. The style of presentation varies from torah to hymn and prayer, but their central purpose is to inform, correct and nurture the faith of the congregation.⁵⁴

This researcher believes that when the teaching/preaching of doctrine is delivered correctly, they can achieve similar goals, but more importantly, valuable lessons of God’s relationship with his people can be taught, which is clearly, one of the functions of this Psalm. James Montgomery Boice in making reference to this writes:

Psalm 78 is a good example. It is one of the great historical Psalms. It recounts the history of the people of Israel in order to draw lessons from it – lessons as to who God is, what he has done, how the people responded to him wrongly in the past, and how they should learn from those past failures today.⁵⁵

⁵² H.D.M. Spenser and Joseph S. Exell, *The Pulpit Commentary, Vol. 8 The Psalms* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm B. Eerdmans Company, 1984), 123.

⁵³ James Luther Mays, Ed., *Psalms Interpretation, A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching* (Louisville, KY: John Knox Press, 1994), 254.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ John Montgomery Boice, *Psalms Vol. 2 Psalms 46 – 106* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1996), 645.

The heading of Psalm 78, *A Maskil of Asaph*, attributes this Psalm to Asaph who according to Derick Kidner was a Levite and one of the founders of a group of singers and most likely a leader of the temple choir in the time of David.⁵⁶ The word *maskil* “is usually supposed to be a studied or instructional ode,”⁵⁷ although the LXX translates it as a Psalm of understanding which includes references to teaching and wisdom⁵⁸ or a didactic discourse.⁵⁹ The author Asaph recounts the history of Israel from the time of its captivity in Egypt to the reign of David, where the Psalm ends abruptly. This sudden termination suggests that it was composed sometime in King Solomon’s reign.⁶⁰ The Psalmist is absorbed in the history of his people and he uses selected incidents to emphasize the need for remembering the past. He is simply not interested in retelling accounts of past history, but a more definite purpose is adduced. He is adamant that history should serve as a means of correct teaching. Each succeeding generation must be told of God’s intervention in human history. The theme could be “lessons from history.”⁶¹

In the first eight verses of the Psalm which serves as the introduction, the people are summoned to listen to the “teachings” which will be given later in the historical

⁵⁶ Derek Kidner, *An Introduction and Commentary of Books I and II of The Psalms 31 – 72* (England: Intervarsity Press Leicester, 1973), 35.

⁵⁷ M.W. Jacobs Ed., *A Standard Bible Dictionary* (New York: Funk and Wagnalls Company, 1909), 713.

⁵⁸ Kidnar, 38.

⁵⁹ Erhard S. Gerstenberger, *Psalms Part 2 and Lamentations* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2001), 93.

⁶⁰ Spence and Joseph, 123.

⁶¹ *Life Application Bible New Revised Standard Version* (Iowa Falls, Iowa: World Bible Publishers, Inc., 1988), 959.

narrative. The word for “teaching” in verse 1 in the Hebrew is *torah*, and without the article as is found here is generally rendered “law, regulation, instruction, and teaching.”⁶² However, an additional meaning could be “teaching derived from the historical narratives of the Old Testament.”⁶³ Teachers were often reminded to use history as a tool to teach the people of God. Parents were also enjoined to perpetuate not only the teachings, but also the traditions. Children were to be instructed concerning God’s acts. These traditions were to be transmitted by teachers.⁶⁴

According to W. Vine, the Torah was given as an aid to achieve a goal or ideal. “In the truest sense, Torah was given to Israel to enable her to truly become and remain God’s people.”⁶⁵ Torah therefore included a corpus of instruction, tradition and history. The Psalmist invites Israel to listen and remember.

The method of communication is specified in verse 2. The Psalmist calls upon his hearers to listen to him as he “opens his mouth and speaks in parables (*mashāl*) and riddles (*hiddāh*). The word parables as is used here means words revelations, declarations or oracles and it suggests that the announcements were to be understood. The intent is not

⁶² William D. Mounce Ed., *Mounce’s Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1984), 710.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Spence and Exell, 123.

⁶⁵ W. E. Vine, *Vine’s Concise Dictionary of Bible Words* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1999), 373.

to conceal the information destined for instruction, but as Spence puts it: “The facts of Israelitish history are the ‘parables’ the inner meaning of which it is for the intelligent to grasp.”⁶⁶

And again here the idea is that God’s dealings with His people had been “dark sayings of old (*hiddāh*) whereto the psalmist would give the clue.”⁶⁷ Verbal communication or teaching/preaching was one of the means used to convey the teachings to the people. According to Donald Williams, “parables” and “riddles” came with the authority of the past, “of old” and brought revelation.”⁶⁸

The first two verses which are referred to as the “call of the didactic opening”⁶⁹ are linked to the following verse and clearly show what is involved in the teaching/preaching presentation. Kraus saw the connection. He states:

The author now links up with the tradition on the basis of which the didactic content is to be understood. The singer does not present a “new teaching,” he takes up what has been received from the fathers, but obviously – as is clear vv. 1 – 2 wants to address the traditional materials in the direction of a very definite secret and expose a hidden aspect of the historical tradition.⁷⁰

Psalms 78: 3 - 8 gives clear echoes of material that could be considered to be a doctrinal presentation, in the sense that it contains correct instructions as to how to avoid unbelief. Verse 3, “which we have heard and known, and our fathers have told us,”

⁶⁶ Spence and Exell, 123.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Donald Williams, *Mastering the Old Testament, Vol. 14 Psalms 73-150* (Dallas, TX: Word Publishing 1987), 58.

⁶⁹ Hans-Joachim Kraus. *Psalms 60 – 150, A Commentary Augsburg* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress 1989), 125.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

specifically states that the revelation was known and heard and that it was handed down by their fathers. Here is a clear indication that teaching occurred. Presumably the elders, leaders and parents had instruction which was adhered to and followed. This method of presentation can be found in Deuteronomy 6: 6–9.

And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shall talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates.

Verse four introduces an interesting change in structure. The personal pronoun “I” is replaced with the plural “we.” This suggests that others are involved in the process of teaching. Both the present children and future generations are to be given correct and faithful instructions. This verse gives the content of the teaching. “The praise worthy deeds of the Lord, his power and the wonders he has done.”

This wording “for he established a testimony in Jacob and appointed a law in Israel”—verse five refers back to Moses. The following quotation illuminates what are the testimony and the law.

The testimony and the laws are the whole series of commands given by God to his people beginning with the directions concerning circumcision in Genesis (xxvii. 10–14) and terminating with the last precept in Deuteronomy (xxxii. 46). They include also the teaching of God through history.⁷¹

⁷¹ Spence, 124.

These teachings were to be transmitted to the children and all future generations as verse six emphasized. The charge to teach is so strong that it includes those yet to be born. For Boice this injunction to teach and carry on correct instruction to generations is paramount. The history of God's dealing with us must be taught to our children. We have a duty to do this because God has commanded us to do it (v, 5), and we should do it because it is the means by which our children may come to put their trust in God and not forget his deeds (v.7). ⁷²

Then says the psalmist,

They would not be like their forefathers—a stubborn and rebellious generation, whose hearts were not loyal to God, whose spirits were not faithful to him. (v.8).

Verses 7 and 8 give the purpose for the teaching. First, a correct and genuine knowledge of God is stressed. Second, a strong desire for a strong relationship with God is hoped for, that is, that all who heard the instruction “might set their hope in God” verse 7. Correct and true knowledge of God should lead to a trust in God. Third, this teaching should lead to obedience “. . . but keep his commandments” vs. 7, and fourth, teaching should serve as a warning and a bulwark against rebellion and, finally, apostasy.

As was previously established, the transmission and transference of beliefs and traditions to present and future generations is one of the factors that necessitated the development of doctrine. This is illustrated by Psalm 78. The purpose of this Psalm is clearly stated. The author is resolute that specific historical facts, their meaning and application must be taught and transmitted to the present and future generation. The impartation of tradition must be faithfully adhered to, for history provides a foundation

⁷² Boice, 645.

upon which loyalty to God is based. Kraus supports this position when he writes, “The entire Psalm carries a didactic accent. One must speak of a doctrine of history as it is laid out in Psalm 78.”⁷³ No new teaching is introduced in this Psalm, which is one of the hallmarks of the presentation of doctrinal teaching/preaching. Kraus further substantiates this when he writes: “The singer does not present a “new teaching,” he takes up what has been received from the fathers . . . The great deeds of God in history are to be attested . . . The oral dissemination . . . was and is an obligation to Israel.”⁷⁴

Psalm 78 contains strong hints of a body of teaching that was to be preserved and transmitted to future generation. J. H. Eaton supports this when he wrote:

The prophetic figure calls upon the gathered people to attend to his sacred teaching. . . he is to tell of the familiar tradition that was solemnly transmitted through the generation . . . For this tradition is no ordinary record of events, but represents a supernatural insight into history and existence.⁷⁵

Although this writer did not locate any specific reference to the word “doctrine” in this particular Psalm, the allusion of a body of knowledge that was intended for continuous transmission is evident. This writer’s conclusion is that this Psalm sanctions the preaching/teaching of doctrine.

Although the word doctrine is not specifically mentioned in the Old Testament, it can be deduced that there was a body of information transmitted to succeeding generations. The Torah contained this knowledge and information which was indispensable to the nation of Israel. Failure to teach this body of instruction could lead

⁷³ Hans –Joachim Kraus, *Psalms 60-150: A Commentary* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress, 1989) 122.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 125.

⁷⁵ J. H. Eaton, *Psalms: Introduction and Commentary* (London, England: SCM Press Ltd., 1967) 195, 196.

them to forget God and eventually result in rebellion. Psalm 78: 1-8, warns against such a possibility.

1 Timothy 1: 3 – 11

The New Testament, however, is much more definitive. The word doctrine is used frequently and the call for its teaching is forcefully enjoined. A look at 1 Timothy 1: 3-11 will substantiate this:

³ As I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine, ⁴ Neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than godly edifying which is in faith: *so do.* ⁵ Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and *of* a good conscience, and *of* faith unfeigned: ⁶ From which some having swerved have turned aside unto vain jangling; ⁷ Desiring to be teachers of the law; understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm. ⁸ But we know that the law *is* good, if a man use it lawfully; ⁹ Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, ¹⁰ For whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for menstealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine; ¹¹ According to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust.

This researcher recognizes the debate concerning the authorship of the Pastorals, and even though this is not a part of this research, the old view that these epistles are authentically Pauline, will be taken.⁷⁶

⁷⁶ John Stott, *Guard the Truth, the Message of I Timothy and Titus* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1996) 21.

John Stott concludes that:

(1) The case for the Pauline authorship of the Pastorals still stands. Both the internal claims and the external witness are strong, substantial and stubborn. The burden of proof rests on those who deny them. (2) The case against the Pauline authorship is far from watertight. The arguments adduced—historical, linguistic, theological and ethical—can all be answered. They are not sufficient to overthrow the case for the Pauline authorship. (3) The case for pseudonymous authorship is unsatisfying. The belief that well-intentioned, even transparently innocent, pseudepigraphy was acceptable lacks evidence. It also raises serious moral questions about the practice of deliberate deceit.⁷⁷

Hence Paul will be referred to as the author of this letter,

In 1 Timothy 1:3 Paul emphatically and categorically commands Timothy a young pastor, to ensure that no other doctrine be declared. The very wording of this verse strongly suggests that there was an established body of doctrine from which there was to be no deviation.

The verb *heterodidaskaleō*, which Paul uses both in 1:3 and in 6:3, clearly indicates that there is a norm of doctrine from which the false teachers had deviated. It is variously designated in the Pastorals. It is called “the faith,” “the truth,” the sound doctrine, “the teaching,” and “the good deposit.” In nearly every one of these expressions the noun is preceded by the definite article, indicating that already a body of doctrine existed which was an agreed standard by which all teaching could be tested and judged. It was the teaching of Christ and of his apostles.⁷⁸

Throughout the pastorals, Paul frequently spoke of doctrine, and the word is qualified by “sound,” from the Greek *hygiaino* when used as an adjective, as is done here, carries the meaning of “that which is trustworthy and accurate.”⁷⁹

⁷⁷ Ibid., 33, 34.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 42, 43.

⁷⁹ Vine, 920.

In the Greek *didaskalia* like *didache* refers to teaching and doctrine and it includes both the material covered and the act of instructing.⁸⁰ *Didaskalia* according to Vine “denotes that which is taught: doctrine . . . teaching . . . learning.” This concurs with *didache* which refers to “that which is taught . . . or the act of teaching.”⁸¹ The meaning of doctrine as depicted sets the foundation for the understanding of Timothy 1:3-11.

It is apparent from verse 3 that Paul made a visit to Macedonia while Timothy remained in Ephesus; and that the reason for the correspondence was to charge the latter as to how he should conduct the affairs of the churches in that city, and undoubtedly one of these charges was to deal with a heresy which was beginning to infiltrate the churches. This, according to Stott, was a false teaching which combined Jewish and Gnostic elements either “a Gnosticizing Judaism” or “Judaizing forms of Gnosticism”⁸²

Gordon Fee writes the following statement which adds some clarity to this verse:

The word translated teach false doctrines apparently coined here and found subsequently only in Christian writings, literally means ‘to teach other things.’ or ‘novelties.’ It is reminiscent of the false teachers of Corinth, who preached a ‘different Jesus’ and ‘a different gospel’ (2Cor. 11:4; cf. Gal, 1:6) . . . Timothy’s purpose in remaining there, then was to command them not to teach false doctrines any longer.⁸³

The use of the Greek work *parathēkē* gives some further insight as to the importance of the teaching of doctrine. The word means a deposit, something placed in

⁸⁰ William D. Mounce, Ed. *Mounce’s Complete Expository dictionary of Old and New Testament Words* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2006), 710.

⁸¹ Vine, 20, 21.

⁸² Stott, 45.

⁸³ Gordon D. Fee, *New International Biblical Commentary 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus* (Peabody, MA: Hindrickson Publishers, 1988), 40.

the custody of usually a banker, who was to ensure that it was kept in a secure location and that when it was returned, and it was absolutely unchanged. John Stott, in making reference to 1 Tim. 1:3, argues that Paul was preoccupied “with the importance of maintaining true or sound doctrine and refuting false doctrine.”⁸⁴ He further forcefully states that there was a certain corpus of doctrine which was known and considered standard, “by which all teaching could be tested and judged.”⁸⁵

The “no other doctrine” mentioned in 1 Tim. 1:3 suggests that at the time of Paul’s correspondence to Timothy, there was some established teaching, which teachers/preachers were to proclaim and members to believe. In his letter to the church at Galatia Paul strongly insists that “no other” *heteros*, that is a different kind of gospel was permitted to be preached even if it was said to be authenticated by angels, if it deviated from that which was sanctioned by the apostles. This command is so serious that Paul vehemently states in the Greek *anathema* that the one who instructed otherwise should be accursed. “But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.” (Gal. 1:8).

Paul’s injunction to Timothy found in verse 3 is duplicated throughout the Pastorals with regularity. There is a sense of urgency that “sound” doctrine be not ignored or neglected. In 2 Tim. 4:2 the language is even more graphic. The preacher is admonished to “preach the word” “and doctrine” with fervor, always “ready” (from the Greek *ephistem* to be ready). The preaching of doctrine is always necessary or as is stated

⁸⁴ Stott, 42.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 43.

in the Seventh-day Adventist Commentary, “In Season out of Season, that is, whether preaching is convenient or inconvenient.”⁸⁶

Paul proceeds in verses 4–11 to connect false teachings and ethical behavior. He lists a series of behavior which are antithetical to the Gospel. He insists that the catalogue of negative behavior he mentioned is in some way related to heretical teachings. The list is not exclusive for in verse 10 it is reiterated, that “if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine.” To Paul, sound, correct, and trustworthy teaching was absolutely necessary to combat heresy and its effects of confusion and disunity in the church. Knowledge of correct doctrine was, it appears, a necessary component to those who were assigned leadership of a congregation, as was Timothy. Paul used strident words to describe the leader’s responsibility in maintaining pure doctrine. He saw the danger that could result to both the intellectual and ethical health of a church.

It can be concluded that the word doctrine in 1 Timothy 1:3, with its qualifier “false” does suggest a body of teaching that was at least known and taught by the apostle Paul. However, it must not be misconstrued that there was some kind of creed that was universal to the first century church, although fragments of supposedly creedal statements are found. Francis Young puts this debate in perspective when he writes:

It must surely be clear that doctrine or teaching of these epistles cannot be simplistically equated with Orthodoxy as later understood. Indeed, the faith enjoined could well imply in many cases the faithfulness or fidelity of the obedient servant rather than referring to any kind of creedal or doctrinal beliefs. . . The teaching is to do with lifestyle.⁸⁷

⁸⁶ Nichol Francis, Ed. *The Seventh-day Adventist Commentary*, Vol.7 (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1976), 47.

⁸⁷ Frances Young, *The Theology of The Pastoral Letters* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 95.

Doctrine therefore could be viewed from a wide perspective, to include both a theological and an ethical component. This writer believes that doctrine does contain both theological and ethical teachings which are necessary for Christian growth and maturity and that the teaching of such is absolutely necessary.

Theological Foundation

This author will use liberal theology, also known as Liberal Protestantism, as the theological perspective of the theological foundation for this paper. The scope of this theology covers disciplines including philosophy, history, sociology, and psychology. In this limited study, it is impossible to adequately discuss all the thinking and issues that emanate from this theology. It is the writer's intent, therefore, to discuss the origin and movement of liberal theology and how its development has impacted the apparent decline of doctrinal teaching/preaching. However, this move is not as simple as it may appear. George Lindbeck illustrates this in his book *The Nature of Doctrine*, where he identifies three aspects of doctrinal complexities. First he mentions the cognitive elements of doctrine which stress the ways in which church doctrines function as "truth claims." Second, the "experiential expressive," which, according to him, interprets religion as non-informative and non discursive symbols of feelings, attitudes or existential overt actions. Finally, Lindbeck mentions the cultural linguistics or narrative, which is an attempt to synchronize the previous two. The reference made to Lindbeck's book here, only serves to show the intricacies inherent in discussing the theological concerns of doctrine and its continuing evolution as it relates to its usefulness in the Christian

Church.⁸⁸ The objective of this theological foundation is specific. It will attempt to show how the change from reason to experience has influenced the departure from doctrinal teaching/preaching.

To define liberal theology is no easy task. It departs greatly from a systematic presentation of doctrines which can and does become dogma. It is more historical in nature than it is confessional, and it depends heavily on intellectual freedom. Bernard Reardon's notes this difficulty when he writes.

To define Liberal Protestantism at all concisely is by no means easy. It is nothing like a closed system of doctrine and has never been formulated in a confession. It is apt to be detached and critical and its general approach to Christianity is historical rather than Schematic.⁸⁹

Dederen also referred to liberalism in these words:

Though used with a variety of shades of meaning, the term describes a movement in modern Protestant theology emphasizing intellectual freedom and a secular humanism inconsistent with biblical orthodoxy.⁹⁰

In the book *Faith Without Certainty*, Paul Razor notes:

. . . we can say that liberal theology is based on the premise that human religiousness should be understood and interpreted from the perspective of modern knowledge and modern life experience.⁹¹

In these definitions, intellectual freedom and investigation are seemingly pitted against orthodoxy, which this writer believes have colored the debate regarding the importance of the teaching of doctrine.

⁸⁸ George Lindbeck, *The Nature of Doctrine* (Philadelphia, PA: The Westminster Press, 1984), 16.

⁸⁹ Bernard Reardon, *Liberal Protestantism* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1968), 9.

⁹⁰ Dederen, xx.

⁹¹ Paul Razor, *Faith Without Certainty* (Boston, MA: Skinner House Books, 2005), 1.

The beginning of liberal theology was inextricably linked to the Enlightenment, which was an Eighteenth Century philosophical movement that disseminated that truth could be discovered mainly through reason, observation, and experiment.⁹²

Reardon substantiated this with these words:

The liberal movement in nineteenth century evangelical Christianity was mainly prompted by the advance of the sciences, especially the sciences of nature. So long as no excessive discrepancy showed itself between what religion bade men believe and what an increasingly common knowledge compelled them to recognize as fact – between their aspirations, that is their understanding – faith encountered no undue strain. . . But when geology came to tell a different story from that of Genesis and the unique creation of man was contradicted by theories based on clear evidence of biology . . . what was the believer to do?⁹³

This opened a door to either holding on to the traditional beliefs or to the pursuit of reason and science as a vehicle to unlocking the trustworthiness of Christianity. Many theologians of this period chose the latter and, as it relates to the importance of doctrine, no one is attributed with more influence than Freidrich Schleiermacher.

Schleiermacher was born in Breslau in 1768, the son of a reformed clergyman. His formal education came from the schools of the Moravians, a strict pietistic sect. He became disillusioned with the teachings of some Christian doctrines and this led him to move to a more liberal university in Halle.⁹⁴ He authored many essays, and books, the most famous of which are *The Christian Faith a Work of Systematic Theology*, and *On Religion: Speeches to its Cultured Despisers*; the latter is still acclaimed as a radical work

⁹² Ibid., xix.

⁹³ Reardon, 11.

⁹⁴ Friedrich Daniel Ernst Schleiermach, *Life and Works* (April 17, 2002), <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/schleiermacher/> (access October 29, 2008).

in the philosophy of religion.⁹⁵ In the foreword of *On Religion: Speeches to its Cultured Despisers* Jack Forstman writes:

If a book can signal the beginning of an era, then Schleiermacher's *On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers* marks the beginning of the era of Protestant Liberal Theology.⁹⁶

In the view of this writer, this statement is far too broad and inclusive; however, Schleiermacher's influence on the subsequent understanding of doctrine and its use and importance in Christianity since his day cannot be downplayed or underestimated.

Fernando Canale, who writes an article in, *The Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology Volume 12*, states the following:

Schleiermacher is considered the father of liberal theology because he devised a new ground on which Christian Theology should build its doctrine. Theology according to Schleiermacher is not grounded in cognitive revelation, or ethics, but in an inner religious experience identified as the feeling of absolute dependence on God. Since God is timeless, immutable, and simple. (Christian Faith, 652, 656).⁹⁷

Reardon adds his opinion of Schleiermacher's role when he states:

. . . Schleiermacher, on the other hand, introduced into religious reflexion a different spirit and gave it a new ethos. For him religion is a condition of the heart. Its essence is feeling. . . Basically it is a feeling of absolute dependence – in the instance of Christianity, a feeling of absolute feeling upon God in Christ – and therefore a matter of individual experience of a personal intuition. Doctrines and rites are subsequent.⁹⁸

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Friedrich Schleiermacher, *On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers* (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press 1994), vii.

⁹⁷ Dederen, 146.

⁹⁸ Reardon, 147.

David F. Wells, in his book *Above all Earthly Pow'rs* makes the following comment about Schleiermacher

This was also clearly the intellectual strategy Friedrich Schleiermacher, the important pioneer of modern theology, adopted in his *On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers* which came out at the height of the European Enlightenment in 1799. In his opening address, he remarked on the fact that this attempt to speak of religion was 'an unexpected undertaking' because those whom he was addressing were so filled with the wisdom of the age and with its plenty that the subject of religion has been 'completely neglected.' Here again was the fear that the modern world had happily left Christian faith behind. Part of this strategy, therefore, was to distance himself from traditional Christian faith, which he believed had been discredited, even as the megachurches are distancing themselves from the traditional church today. He redefined religion's essence as 'neither thinking nor acting but intuition and feeling.' By the end of his little work he had made the argument that life opens up for us 'vistas' into the eternal which create in us the feelings which are the raw material of religion, even if the intellectuals he was addressing did not quite recognize these feelings for what they were. The result, then, was that 'religion'—or in the language of today, 'spirituality,' which is its substitute—could actually be found under many intellectual and artistic forms.⁹⁹

At this juncture, it is important to note that the early proponents of Liberal Theology had no intentions to destroy Christianity, but as David Wells argues, they

... set out to save Christianity and not destroy it, to preserve the possibility of some kind of belief when the enlightenment was making traditional Christian believing quite impossible.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁹ David F. Wells, *Above all Earthly Pow'rs* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2006), 279, 280.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

Wells continues to say that this liberal thought was necessary to compensate for the “. . . loss of historical, orthodox belief and acceptance within a culture dominated by Enlightenment humanism and rationalism.”¹⁰¹

This position has resulted, according to Wells in the present day evangelicals’ capitulation to the postmodern trends in society, where orthodox views are in jeopardy.¹⁰² He makes a comparison of the liberal theological position with the church today.

While the routes taken by the earlier liberals and now by contemporary evangelicals may be a little different, there nevertheless is an important shared belief. It is that the only means to survival in the modern world is to adapt Christian faith in some way. The Liberals did this by modifying its doctrinal content. Seeker-sensitive evangelicals claim not to be doing this but, rather modifying its form of delivery.¹⁰³

The view seems to be that theological statements or truths which were hashed out over the centuries are not necessary “theological truth, it is thought, is not what builds churches.”¹⁰⁴

In fairness to Schleiermacher these quotations could be taken out of context, for he surely does not advocate an individualistic religion. A review of his writings show, for example, as Van Dusen argues, that for Schleiermacher Christianity was the religion of redemption through Jesus of Nazareth and the way in which Christ affects redemption was important.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Ibid., 281.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Henry P. Van Dusen, *The Vindication of Liberal Theology* (New York, NY: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1963) 180.

This writer does not subscribe wholly to the contention that Schleiermacher was solely responsible for the move away from doctrine to feeling and a decline of emphasis on the fundamental teaching of Christianity. Although it is true that he influenced this trend, other theologians contributed to this drift. Among these were F. C. Baur, D. F. Strauss, A. von Harnack, Albrect Ritchel in Europe, Horace Bushnell and William Newton Clark in the United States.¹⁰⁶

Since the inception of what is called liberal theology, in the eighteenth century, many other theologians have contributed many approaches to the debate of the importance of doctrine. Among those worthy of note are Rudolph Bultman and his demythologizing of Christ, Alfred Whitehead and his metaphysical system. This writer has of necessity limited the discussion to the importance of doctrinal teaching, and this means that other aspects of Liberal Protestant theology has been omitted, however there is one contemporary approach which needs to be cited and that is the Jesus Seminar. The basic premise of this approach is that Jesus should be set free from the Scriptural and creedal prison in which he has been imprisoned by Christians.¹⁰⁷ This position if given credence would mean that the doctrine and Christ and his work would be discounted. Teachings such as the incarnation, some of his miracles, the resurrection and ascension would be jettisoned.

This writer does not believe that all aspects of Liberal Theology are negative and should be avoided, for it was not the intent of most of these theologians to discredit Christianity. However, it is evident to this writer that some of the positions advanced

¹⁰⁶ T. C. O'Brien, Editor, *The Encyclopedic Dictionary of the Western Churches* (Washington, DC: Corpus Publications, 1970), 452, 453.

¹⁰⁷ Dederen, 198.

have unintentionally resulted in distrust in, and in other cases, a dislike for any teaching of doctrinal truths. A review of contemporary approaches to the lack of the teaching of doctrine show, at least, a link, no matter how minimal, to the argument of Schleiermacher, the one most associated with liberal theology.

Kirby Anderson in his book *Signs of Warning Signs of Hope* connects the decline of spirituality with a lack of awareness of Christian doctrines. According to him, “. . . there is not sturdiness of belief. There is a lack of knowledge of Christian doctrines of atonement, redemption and grace.”¹⁰⁸

Donald Miller in his discussion of what he calls the “new paradigm churches” makes the following observations.

For example, many evangelicals and fundamentalists emphasize doctrine over religious experience. New paradigm Christians in contrast are doctrinal minimalists. Their emphasis is on one’s relationship with Jesus . . . New paradigm Christians view doctrine as being of human origin and sees it as something that often divides the church.¹⁰⁹

Other quotations such as “In other words, new paradigm Christianity is not primarily a matter of cognitive assent; it is an attitude and a relationship between the individual and God.”¹¹⁰ And again, “Over and over, new paradigm Christians express their emphasis on personal conviction over doctrine.”¹¹¹

¹⁰⁸ Kirby Anderson, *Sings of Warning Signs of Hope* (Chicago, IL, Moody Press, 1944), 232.

¹⁰⁹ Donald E. Miller, *Reinventing American Protestantism Christianity in the New Millennium* (Berkeley, CA: University Press of California, 1997), 123.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 128.

¹¹¹ Ibid., 129.

Marva Dawn in her book, *Reaching Out Without Dumbing Down* decries what she calls, the postmodern culture in regards to the belief in objective truth. According to her, the

More highly visible is the stream of postmodernist who take the trajectory of contingency and relativity to a ruthless extreme. A baseball jock makes clear the progression in history from the pre-modern belief in objective truth to postmodernity's deconstructionism. A premodern empire once said, 'there's balls and there's strikes, and I calls 'em as they is.' Believing in an absolute truth that could be found, earlier societies looked for evidence to discover that truth. A modern empire would say instead, 'There's balls and there's strikes, and I calls 'em as I sees 'em.' For the modernist, truth is to be bound in one's own experience.¹¹²

All of this according to her culminates in the state of affairs that now exists in the church where:

We easily notice the ignorance of the Scriptures and biblical illiteracy that characterize the present Church, yet many react "to cultural pressure by scaling down serious biblical reflection. They would sooner entertain their audiences than risk being criticized for being too serious, abstract and boring.' This leads to sermons that might make people laugh and cry but don't necessarily enable them to know better, think more clearly, or act in godly ways.¹¹³

In the book, *The Coming Evangelical Crisis*, edited by John H. Armstrong, the following statement is found:

But since the beginning of the last century, the democratizing influence has bred a suspicion and outright hostility towards creeds, confessions and catechisms 'Don't Fence Me In' is the egalitarian spirit of Romantic individualism that so characterizes our age and our church.¹¹⁴

¹¹² Marva J. Dawn, *Reaching Out Without Dumbing Down* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1995) 36.

¹¹³ Ibid., 216.

¹¹⁴ John H. Armstrong, ed., *The Coming Evangelical Crisis* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1996), 250.

This de-emphasis of doctrine is again alluded to by O. S. Guinness in his description of the Church Movement. He writes:

This early nineteenth century change is a particularly important precedent because it was not so much from Calvinism to Armenianism as from theology to experience, from truth to technique . . . and from an emphasis on serving God to an emphasis on “servicing the self” in Serving God.¹¹⁵

John Stott in discussing William Wilberforce and the abolition of slavery makes reference to this quotation:

Above all, the fatal habit of considering Christian morals as distinct from Christian doctrines has imperceptibly gained strength . . . Even in the majority of sermons today one can scarcely find a trace of biblical doctrine.¹¹⁶

The authors quoted above all seem to concur with the position that there has been a change from rigorous presentation of accepted doctrinal beliefs to a more general delivery of Christian beliefs, and in some way they also all link this shift to what they call liberal theology, or the parallel term of modernity.

Donald G. Bloesch gives a timely warning on “an emphasis in religious experience over doctrine.”¹¹⁷

Too many evangelicals today seek a continuous mountain-top experience and avoid controversial theological issues. Practical piety and mystical awareness figure more highly than biblical or dogmatic theology. One interpreter candidly observes that modern ‘evangelicalism, with the roots in the open-air eighteenth century English preaching and the nineteenth century American frontier, centers not on Scripture, church, doctrine or sacraments, but on personal experience. Having the right kind of conversion, second-

¹¹⁵ OS Guinness, *Dinning With the Devil* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1993), 27.

¹¹⁶ John Stott, *The Incomparable Christ* (Downers Grove IL: InterVarsity Press, 2001), 161.

¹¹⁷ Donald G. Bloesch, *Essentials of Evangelical Theology* Vol.1 (New York, NY: HarperCollins Publishers, 1982), 1.

blessing, *piece*, etc., becomes all-important, and without it all else may be suspect.¹¹⁸

David F. Wells insightfully adds that:

The contraction of reality into the self, whether in its Liberal or evangelical version, introduces nothing more or less than the reordering of reality by our modernized world, and the first casualty of this reordering, with respect to the mind, is the belief that truth is something that should be found outside of our own subjective consciousness. It is simply incontrovertible that the disappearance of a belief that truth of this order destroys both the soil in which any theology must grow and the criterion by which it must be judged. Without this criterion, "theology" becomes autobiography, and, no matter how revealing it is of the person who "shares" it, it can have no public significance.¹¹⁹

This change may appear innocent and inconsequential, but the results have greatly impacted doctrinal teaching/preaching today. Many preachers/teachers and parishioners consider this type of proclamation dull and boring and therefore irrelevant. The following quotation succinctly describes the dilemma of doctrinal teaching/preaching.

The progressive perspective believes that doctrinal instruction fails adequately to engage the culture or needs of the audience. Doctrinal preaching stands accused of irrelevance of addressing the mind but leaving the heart untouched, of being an intellectual exercise that fails to engage the real world. It is said to divide Christians, and bore them with catechisms and proof texts.¹²⁰

This quotation does contain some elements of truth, but if it is accepted without question, great damage to teaching/preaching of the great major Christian themes could result, for example: The Doctrine of God, the Doctrine of Man, The Doctrine of Salvation, The Doctrine of the Church, The doctrine of The Christian Life, and The

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 1, 2.

¹¹⁹ David F. Wells, *No Place for Truth: or Whatever Happened to Evangelical Theology?* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1993), 281.

¹²⁰ Dan Doriani, Doctrinal Preaching in Historical Perspective available from http://findarticles.com/p/articles/miqa3803is_200204/ain906513/print (Accessed October 2, 2008.).

Doctrine of Last Things.¹²¹ This writer is convinced that each of these is a necessary component of spiritual maturity.

Each of the six categories can be broken down into constituent fundamental beliefs. Under The Doctrine of God, the following subheadings can be listed: The Word of God, The Godhead, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. The doctrine of God is foundational to Christian theology since God relates to everything and everything is related to him. To ignore this tenet is to destroy the very body of Christian beliefs. To attempt to preach/teach about God without knowing or understanding the concept of the Godhead is an exercise in futility. Included under the Doctrine of Man is the belief in the Creator and nature of man. If these two topics are not explored and proclaimed, the themes of worship and relationship are diminished. The Doctrine of Salvation explains, Christology, that is, the need for the birth, life, death, and resurrection of Christ, and in addition the experience and results of salvation cannot be dismissed.

Ecclesiology follows next - its purpose and its services are, for example, spiritual gifts, baptism and the Lord's Supper. The Doctrine of the Christian Life highlights marriage, and the family, Christian behavior and stewardship. Finally, there is Doctrine of Last Things with the second return of Christ and the setting up of the New Earth. These doctrines are of vital importance to the spiritual growth and development of the congregation. Failure to see the relevance and importance of the theology behind doctrinal teaching/preaching can result in spiritual stagnation.

There has been some innovation in presenting God's Word, and all cannot or should be discounted, but it is the opinion of this writer that whatever method is used, the

¹²¹ Ministerial Association, *Seventh-day Adventist Believe* (Nampa, Idaho: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 2005), 111.

preaching of doctrine is necessary for spiritual growth and meaning. In the opinion of this writer, the invasion of some aspects of liberal theology, especially that of subjectivism into the church has heightened the dislike for doctrinal teaching/preaching.

The following quotation from David F. Wells eloquently summaries the theological concerns of doctrinal preaching/teaching:

A religion based on mere feeling is the vaguest most unreliable, most unstable of all things. A strong, stable, religious life can be built on no other ground than that of intelligent conviction. Intelligent conviction requires for its underpinning and, indeed, its explanation, a truth that is objectively true. Unless truth is objective, it cannot be declared to others, cannot be taught to others, cannot be required of others. Wherever biblical religion has been recovered, the recovery of the teaching office is never far behind. . . And wherever this preaching takes root, there the desire to know and practice God's truth begins to blossom.¹²²

This writer is hesitant to completely apportion blame entirely on liberal theology, for no one system, movement or philosophy arises without some relation to what preceded it. The decline of doctrinal presentations can be blamed not only on the content selected but more so on the delivery method. For instance, the objective fact of biblical truths was more debated than the significance of the event - the resurrection is a good example. Reference could also be made to the teachings of the Trinity, the Second Coming of Christ and the Atonement.

All philosophies that eventually develop into movements are based on ideas which are important and believed. Decisions are made based on some foundational truth. This operates in every belief system and Christianity is no different. For the Christian, the Bible becomes the bedrock on which beliefs are centered. Doctrines are just statements of

¹²² Wells, 281, 282.

beliefs that are biblically based. It is true that there are sometimes differences in interpretation of these doctrinal positions, but this does not justify the calls for elimination. Doctrines are necessary and relevant for they are foundational to a Christian world view. Alister McGrath makes some poignant comments in reference to the importance and relevance of doctrine when he writes:

Doctrine makes truth-claims. To speak of doctrine as ‘truth’ is rightly to draw attention to the fundamental Christian conviction that doctrine claims to make significant and justifiable statements about the order of things, about things are. . . Doctrine describe what Christians believe to be true . . . Doctrine arises within the community of faith, as it seeks to make sense and give order and structure to its experience of the encounter with God through the risen Christ.¹²³

Doctrines are therefore the teachings of the Bible written in concise statements so as to emphasize some necessary beliefs and, as such, are relevant to spiritual growth.

Recent publications reveal, however, that there is a trend to dismiss biblical concepts in the quest for spirituality. The following reported in a news release under the heading “Spirituality not Religion, makes Kids Happy” suggests that “ religion is just one institutionalized venue for the practice of or experience of spirituality, and some people say that they are spiritual but are less enthusiastic about the concept of God.”¹²⁴

Again in an article entitled, *Has the ‘Notion of Sin’ been lost?* The writer in discussing this topic make statements which, while not specifically directed to doctrine, yet still suggests that some kind of belief is needed if sin is to be regarded. Albert Mothler, President of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, is quoted

¹²³ McGrath, 19, 20.

¹²⁴ Live Science Staff, “*Spirituality, not religion, makes kids happy* (January 2009) www.msnbc.msn.com/id/28579289 (accessed January 12, 2009).

as saying, “I wonder whether even some Christian churches are making the connection between Christ’s death and resurrection and victory over sin – the linchpin doctrine of Christianity.”¹²⁵

In the same article Joel Osteen is described as a pastor who “never mentions sin in his T.V. sermons or in his best seller such as *Your Best Life Now* gives his response to this by saying, “I never thought about (using the word ‘sinners’) but I probably don’t. . . When I get them to church, I want to tell them that you can change.”¹²⁶

These sentiments are gaining more currency in the life and community of the contemporary church. Doctrine is, in the opinion of many, not an important part of the Christian’s spiritual growth. In response to this idea the writer concurs with McGrath who pens these words:

Doctrine preserves the Christian church from woolly and confused understandings of its identity a calling, and provides believers with framework for interpreting and ambiguities of human experience. It is the natural outcome of Christian reflection on the mysteries of faith. It allows the ambiguities of human experience in the world to be interpreted and transformed. It opens the way to the construction of a world-view, through which Christian attitudes and approaches to a range of matters—social, spiritual, ethical and political—can be developed. . . Doctrine may at times seem to be something of an irrelevance—but on a closer inspection is holds the key to the future of the Christian faith in the modern world. The church cannot think, let alone act, without basing its thoughts and actions upon a doctrinal foundation. Doctrine must continue to be, and to be *allowed and recognized to be*, a central resource in Christian education.¹²⁷

¹²⁵Cathy Lynn Grossman, “Has the ‘notion of sin’ been Lost?” (2008), http://www.usatoday.com/news/religion/2008-03-19-sin_n.htm (accessed September 30, 2008).

¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷ McGrath, 177.

Doctrinal teaching/preaching is necessary not only to guard the truth, but in addition, it deepens knowledge of the Christian belief which is a prerequisite for building a relationship with God.

CHAPTER FOUR

METHODOLOGY

Multiple research methods are employed to collect and analyze data and then interpret the results, but by far the most common type is action research. Action Research sometimes referred to as “practitioner research” is an investigation of a personal interest, problem or challenge, where questions are developed, and answers arrived at through the collection of data.¹ In this ministry project a quantitative method of inquiry was utilized. Quantitative research which is an aspect of action research is useful because it is considered to be a generally accepted method to test theories.

Quantitative research is deductive, that is, it is used to test a theory and the results are generally in nature, in addition, it makes use of data that can be transported into numbers, therefore objectivity, deductiveness, general usability and numbers are important.²

The hypothesis for this project looked at the need for the teaching of doctrine. The researcher believes that the teaching of doctrine is necessary to build a relationship with God.

¹ Ways of Approaching Research: Quantitative Designs, <http://www.fortunecity.com/greenfield/grizzly/432/rra2.htm> (accessed September 21, 2008).

² Ibid.

A pre-test questionnaire was given to ascertain the participant's knowledge level of six of the twenty-eight fundamental teachings of the Seventh-day Adventist Church and how they relate to building a relationship with God.

At the conclusion of a series of lessons, the identical questionnaire was again administered to discover if there was any change in their belief that an understanding of doctrine had any effect on building a relationship with God. The researcher hoped that a positive change on the post test would validate the need for the teaching of doctrine.

Sixteen members from Ethan Temple responded to the invitation to participate in this project. Each individual was asked to respond to a pretest, which was objective in structure. The questionnaire consisted of 20 questions which dealt with six groups of doctrinal beliefs. The responses were collected and secured by a professional associate so as to preserve confidentiality.

The presentation consisted of six lessons given in six sessions, with each session lasting for approximately 45 minutes. The topics taught were as follows:

- | | | |
|-----------|---|-----------------------------|
| Session 1 | - | The Holy Scriptures |
| Session 2 | - | The Trinity |
| Session 3 | - | The Return of Jesus |
| Session 4 | - | The Experience of Salvation |
| Session 5 | - | Confession and Forgiveness |
| Session 6 | - | Spiritual Gifts |

Each participant was given a magazine *We Believe*, which contains a brief explanation of the 28 fundamental beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. This

magazine is published by *The Signs of the Times*, a monthly publication of the Pacific Press Association and the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Each session began with prayer, which was then followed by a presentation by the researcher. Questions were asked throughout, and participation was encouraged. The lessons were well received and there were animated discussions. This format was followed throughout all six Sessions. After the sixth lesson was taught, the post test which was the same as the pre-test was administered. The intent of which was to assess if there was any change in their knowledge of the ten fundamental doctrines taught and how they viewed the relationship of doctrine to a relationship with God. Statistical data which was a part of the entire exercise was collected.

CHAPTER FIVE

FIELD EXPERIENCE

The actual field study for this project began on Monday September 8, 2008, with the initial Bible Study. Before the presentation of the first Lesson, the participants were again given the purpose of the lesson studies, with instruction as to how the pretest was to be taken. The lessons were based on a booklet entitled. *We Believe*. This material presented in this periodical contained a synopsis of the twenty-eight fundamental beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, and the information accurately represents the Church's position on doctrinal beliefs. Special care was taken to ensure confidentiality, a necessary requirement for the D. Min. Project.

Sixteen members took the pre-test. The survey showed that about 98% had a basic knowledge of the doctrine. The researcher gave the pretest to discover if the participants had a general knowledge of the fundamental beliefs and what their knowledge had to do with a relationship with God. Results of the pretest showed that 43.75% did not see how this knowledge related to their relationship with God - 50% registered as sure.

The first lesson as well as all subsequent lessons began with prayer. The participants were given the magazine *We Believe*, and they were asked to follow as the Lesson entitled "God's Wonderful Book" was taught. The main themes covered were revelation, inspiration, authorship and use of the Bible. This lesson generated much

discussion and it set the atmosphere for the lessons that followed. At the conclusion of this lesson, the attendees were invited to read the material for the next session, a practice which continued until the completion of the lessons.

Lesson Two dealt with the Trinity, and included not only the composition of the Godhead and its attributes, but its work on behalf of humanity. At the completion of this lesson the participants remained for a prolonged discussion on this topic.

Lesson Three was based on doctrinal beliefs on the return of Jesus and it covered areas such as the manner, purpose and reason for His return. The researcher emphasized in each lesson that the doctrines all point to a knowledge of God, for if God is unknown, there can be no real relationship with Him.

Lessons Four and Five were centered on salvation. Emphasis was placed on repentance, confession, forgiveness, justification and sanctification. The researcher was careful to explain these terms since there appears to be a certain amount of apprehension about theological terminology. Discussion was encouraged and those attending expressed their joy in studying the Bible, especially as it related to Salvation.

Lesson Six dealt with the Church and Spiritual Gifts. This lesson was the final one taught. As was mentioned before, each lesson connected the doctrine with a relationship with God.

Pre/Post-test Questionnaire Results

Table 1 shows the results to the statement of the relationship concerning doctrine and its relevance to knowing God. Out of a total of 16 participants 4 persons (25%) strongly agreed that it was relevant; 3 persons (18.75%) agreed. 1 respondent (6.25%) was unsure. Out of the remaining 50%, 7 (43.75%) disagreed and 1 (6.25%) strongly disagreed.

The results of the post test revealed some dramatic changes. All of those who agreed on were unsure (100%) changed opinion and disagreed with the statement 12.5 % agreed and 87.5 disagreed strongly.

Table 2 presents the results of the statement in reference to the Bible as the inspired word of God. The pretest revealed that 100% agreed with the statement and the post-test showed that there was no change in opinion.

In Table 3 the response to the statement concerning the Trinity remained constant. One hundred percent agreed that the Trinity is a unit of three co-eternal persons.

Table 4 shows that in the pre-test, 75 strongly agreed, 18.75 agreed with the statement of the incarnation and its purpose and while 6% were unsure, the post-test revealed that 100% now agreed strongly with the statement. Table 5 presents the results in response to the statement concerning the death of Christ and His work after the ascension. Seventh-five percent agreed strongly and 25% agreed with the statement which rose to 87.5% in the post-test.

Table 6 shows that in response to the statement concerning the person and work of the Holy Spirit, there was 100% agreement. There was no change in the post-test.

In Table 7 in response to the statement on the creation, the pre-test shows that 94% agreed and 6 % were unsure. The post-test revealed that 100% of respondents of the post-test agreed with the statement.

Table 8: Demonstrates the same pattern as in Table 7—100% agreed with the statement concerning the creation of mankind and the purpose for this creation. There was no change in the post-test.

Table 9 shows the results in the response to the statement of the resurrection. In the pre-test, 14 or 87.5% agreed, 1 or 6% was unsure and 1 or 6% disagreed. The post-test shows that all 100% agreed with the statement. The results of Table 10 show that there was no change. One hundred percent agreed with the statement before and after the study. However, the strongly agreed rose from 81.25% to 93.75%. Table 11 demonstrates that there was no change between the pre-test and the post-test in reference to the statement concerning the church. One hundred percent agreed with the statement. Again, there was an increase in the number of those who strongly agreed.

Table 12 reveals that in the pre-test, 15 or 94% agreed with the statement that in Christ there is no division. One or 6% disagreed. After the post-test, 100% agreed with the statement, with those who strongly agreed increased from 87% to 100%.

Table 13 illustrates that there was no change in response to the statement concerning baptism. One hundred percent agreed with the statement in the pre-test and the post-test. Strongly agreed rose from 93.75% to 100%.

Table 14 portrays that there was no change in response to the statement of spiritual gifts, and their use. One hundred percent agreed with the statement in both the pre-test and post-test. Those who strongly agreed rose by 6%. (Appendix D, Table 14.)

In Table 15 the pretest revealed that 15 or 94% agreed with the statement concerning marriage, while 6% were unsure. The results of the post test shows that 100% percent now agreed.

Table 16 shows change some in attitude, between the pre-test and the post-test. One hundred percent agreed strongly with the statement concerning the second coming of Christ, where initially 87.50% had strongly agreed.

Table 17: Reveals that the one respondent who previously agreed with the statement on the state of the dead was led to agree strongly after the study.

Table 18 gives the result in response to the statement concerning the millennium. In the pre-test 14 or 87.5% agreed, 6.2% were unsure and 6.2% disagreed. The post-test showed that there was a change to 100% agreement with 93.7% now agreeing strongly.

Table 19: There was no change in the responses in the pre-test and post-test. One hundred percent agreed with the statement concerning the church and its work, with 15% of the 16 respondents agreeing strongly.

Table 20 reveals that once again, there was no change in attitude towards the statement of the communion service in both the pre-test and post-test. There was 100% agreement with the statement—97.75% agreeing fully.

The researcher approached this project with the basic assumptions that the members of Ethan Temple Seventh-day Adventist church did not have a profound knowledge of the major doctrines of the church and second, that they did not understand the connection between the beliefs, and how they related to a relationship with God. It was the researcher's intention to show that through correct doctrinal teaching/preaching, the correlation between doctrinal teaching/preaching and a relationship with God would

lead to an attitudinal change towards the necessity of doctrines in the Christian experience.

After analyzing the data from the pre and post test questionnaires, the researcher discovered the following: first, the participants who took part in the survey had a good knowledge of the doctrines and most of them agreed with the basic tenants of the beliefs. The hunch that there was a deficiency in knowledge category was disproved by the results. It was shown clearly that the need for the presentation was not a major concern. However, benefits were derived from the doctrinal presentations since the knowledge base was further strengthened with the results moving from an average of eighty percent in the pretest to almost one hundred percent in the post test.

Second, about forty-three percent did not agree with the statement that the teaching/preaching of doctrine had any correlation with having a relationship with God, while forty-nine percent agreed that some connection existed. Six percent were not sure of their position. These results showed to a degree that there was some division as to the importance of doctrinal teaching/preaching. The conclusion drawn from these statistics suggest that even though most of the participants agreed with and had a good knowledge of the doctrines of the church, they were not totally convinced as to the importance of doctrines in terms of having a relationship with God. These results confirmed the researcher's initial thought that participants did not fully grasp the interrelation between doctrinal teaching/preaching and an experience of God.

Third, from the post test, it was evident to the researcher that when the doctrinal teaching/preaching was clearly presented, there was a dramatic change of attitude, and

the connection between doctrinal teaching/preaching and an experience of a relationship with God was accepted by the participants.

In retrospect, the researcher could have addressed the entire project in such a way that the following could have been at least considered:

First, the questionnaires could have been more clearly stated, especially statement one. It is possible that the wording was somewhat confusing, and the data for this may have been skewed. A better working knowledge of the Lippert scale and its operation would have produced more accurate information.

Second, a wider cross section of the church could have been tested. More youth of the church should have been included to ascertain how they viewed doctrinal presentations, and their importance and/or necessity. Some questions should have been framed specifically for this age group.

Third, the group tested could have been larger. The logistics of how church members were contacted posed a major problem, and the fact that the researcher was reassigned to another pastoral district during the execution of project affected the entire process.

Fourth, the researcher believes that other beliefs which were not included in the questionnaire could have resulted in a more accurate description of the participants' attitude to doctrinal presentations.

Although there were some deficiencies, the ministry project did achieve this one objective, that doctrinal preaching provides the foundation upon which a relationship with God can be forged. The fact that participants changed their attitude and agreed that

there was a strong correlation between doctrinal teaching/preaching and a relationship with God was indeed exciting and encouraging to the researcher.

This research, because of time limitation, was intended to address a small section of the debate that rages on in contemporary Christian circles today. That is, “Why is doctrinal teaching necessary”? Two extreme positions have emerged. On one hand, some have concluded that doctrine is a relic of the past, which hangs its existence on Scholasticism and the Enlightenment, philosophical systems that have long outlived their usefulness. As a result, statements of beliefs are viewed as dogmatic, narrow minded and biased. For some Christians, doctrines are irrelevant to today’s society, where rationalism and pluralism hold sway. To assert that ultimate truth exists and that it is to be preserved and transmitted to the present and future generations is summarily dismissed. Conversely, the other side of the debate insists that feeling, experience and relationships are more important. This has led to “the wealth and health” pronouncements commonly referred to as “the prosperity gospel,” where instant gratification is the hallmark. Fellowship, community and social intercourse matter most. Practical application to the present life is what counts most.

To view Christianity to be an either or proposition is to weaken its effectiveness. The researcher believes that doctrine is needed today, and feeling should never negate its significance. This project though limited in scope reveals that doctrine and relationship are interrelated and that de-emphasis on doctrine can have an unhealthy effect on the spiritual life. The challenge for pastors is not to take the extremes, but to find the balance between the teaching/preaching of doctrine and how it relates to a relationship with God.

CHAPTER SIX

REFLECTIONS, SUMMARY, AND CONCLUSION

The Researcher's hypothesis was that the teaching of doctrine is a necessary component in the development of a relationship with God. During the presentation of six doctrinal studies in six sessions, the researcher collected data from the pre and post test which revealed that the members of Ethan Temple Seventh-day Adventist Church did understand that there is a correlation between doctrine and a relationship with God.

The hypothesis was proven and it is now abundantly obvious that the teaching/preaching of doctrine and developing a relationship with God are intimately related. The Seventh-day Adventist (Adventist) church from its inception has emphasized the knowledge aspect of Christianity. In its official pronouncement, there is a strong statement which emphasizes that the Organization has no creeds. However, there are twenty-eight statements which are referred to as fundamental beliefs. Adventists are taught the foundational beliefs and candidates for baptism are required to at least have a knowledge of them.

It is clear from the questionnaire that all of the respondents had a working knowledge of the doctrines given in the pre and post tests. It can be reasonably deduced that the teaching of doctrine is present. However, there was one glaring inconsistency which appeared in the pretest. Some respondents did not agree that the doctrines engendered a relationship with God. This presented the likelihood of a problem to this researcher. It is possible that the presentation, whether in teaching or preaching, which-

ever method is employed, does not connect doctrines with relationship to God, and this could lead to what has been sometimes leveled against the Adventist Church, namely, that salvation is the result of the knowledge of truth, as they understand it.

This researcher does not believe that doctrines or relationship stand alone. There must be a concerted effort by the teaching or preaching of God's word to show how the two interact and inform each other. In the researcher's view, it is not doctrines that present the problem; it is more the inability of the presenters to show the necessary relationship. This ministry project and subsequent field study have reinforced this writer's contention that when doctrines are clearly shown to lead to relationship with God, the notion that doctrines are irrelevant is reversed.

Even though this project did not seek to determine the best methods to present doctrines, it will be valuable if others interested in doctrines could develop the best means of making doctrinal teaching/preaching more effective. The success of this project lies in the heartening results that after the teaching of six lessons of doctrines, there was an agreement that doctrine and a relationship with God are important. This research affirms that the teaching/preaching of doctrine is relevant and necessary for building a relationship with God.

APPENDIX A**LESSONS**

LESSON I

God's Wonderful Book

I. Introduction

- a. The God of the Bible reveals Himself
- b. He shows us His character and His will
- c. It reveals the way of Salvation.
- d. The Bible including the Old and New Testament is a record of God's communication with the world.

II. Who wrote the Bible?

- a. God the Holy Spirit inspired the various Bible writers – 2 Tim 3: 15, 16.
- b. Prophets did not originate messages – 2 Peter 1:20.
- c. God spoke unto prophets - Hebrews 1: 1.
- d. Contains no private interpretation - 2 Peter 1: 20.

III. Importance of Bible Study

- a. It makes people wise concerning Salvation - 2 Tim. 3:15.
- b. It gives light - Psalm 119: 105.
- c. God's Word is a safe moral guide.

- d. Through spending time with the Bible the new birth is experienced
–1 Peter 1: 23.
- e. It brings about a transformation into His image – 2 Cor. 3: 18.
- f. It provides spiritual nourishment – Jer. 15: 16.
- g. When hidden in the mind it is a bulwark against sin – Ps.119: 9.

IV. Conclusion

- 1 God's Word is a source of comforts.
- 2 It contains our hope of salvation.
- 3 The Bible is the living Word of God
- 4 God speaks to us through its words today.

LESSON II

The Trinity

A. Introduction

- a. God exists as three distinct Persons
- b. God the Father: From whom all things came - 1 Corinthians 8:6 - One God Father of all who is above all, and through all, and in all. – Eph 4:6
- c. God the Son. “For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity dwells – Colossians 2: 9.
- d. God the Holy Spirit: You have lied to the Holy Spirit. . . You have not lied to men but to God – Acts 5: 34.

B. God the Father

- a. God is a loving Father – Matt. 5: 45
- b. He God is not an impersonal force
- c. The Bible says that God “talks,” “hears,” “sees,” “writes,” “suffers.”
- d. He created and sustains all things.

C. God the Son

- a. He is the creator of all things – John 1: 1 – 3
- b. He was incarnated – John 1: 14
- c. Through Him the Character of God is revealed
- d. He died to bring reconciliation to God

D. God the Holy Spirit

- a. The Holy Spirit is a person fully Divine
- b. He was actively involved in creation
- c. The Holy Spirit guides, leads and gives power to live holy lives.

E. Conclusion:

God invites us to know Him. The triune God promises “You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.” Jeremiah 29: 13.

LESSON III

The Return of Jesus

- I. The Bible categorically states that Jesus will return to this earth
 - a. Jesus himself says he will return – John 14: 1 – 3.
 - b. Angels corroborated Jesus' pronouncements – Acts 1: 9 – 11.
- II. How will His coming be manifested?
 - a. It will be a visible appearance – Rev. 1: 7.
 - b. His coming will be very visible – Matt. 24: 26, 27.
 - c. His return will be glorious – Matt. 24: 30.
 - d. Angels will accompany Him at His coming – Matt. 24:31.
 - e. His coming will be a physical appearing – Luke 24: 33 – 43.
 - f. His coming will not be a secret arrival – Matt. 24: 23 – 26.
- III. Purpose for the Return of Jesus
 - a. To resurrect the dead – 1Thess. 4: 16, 17.
 - b. To transform our bodies to be like His – Phil. 3:21
 - c. To give immortality – 1 Cor. 15: 51 – 53.
 - d. To award crown of life to the righteous – 2 Tim. 4: 8.
- IV. Different classes of People at His Coming
 - a. The wicked who are fearful – Rev. 6: 15 – 17.
 - b. The rejoicing of righteous – Isa. 25:9.

V. The Christian's attitude in preparation for Christ's return:

- a. Attend to the social concerns in today's world
- b. Pay attention to evangelization
- c. Prepare oneself for the event.

LESSON IV

What is Bible Conversion?

- I. How is mankind's lost condition described in the Bible?
 - a. All have sinned – Romans 3:10, 12, and 23.
 - b. Under death sentence – Romans 5: 12; 6:23.
 - c. Righteousness as filthy rags – Isaiah 64: 6.
 - d. Helpless to change – Jer. 13: 23.
- II. How is sin defined in God's Word"
 - a. God's law His standard – Romans 7:12.
 - b. Transgression of law sin – 1 John 3:4.
 - c. All unrighteousness is sin – 1 John 5:17
 - d. Disobedience – Romans 5: 19.
 - e. Sin is rebellion – Daniel 9:5.
- III. How must man cooperate with God for Salvation?
 - a. God's Part.
 - i. Gave His Son – John 3: 16
 - ii. Dies for our sins – 1 Cor. 15:3.
 - iii. Wounded for our transgressions – Isaiah 53: 5, 6.
 - iv. Bore our sins – 1 Peter 2: 22, 24.
 - v. Death paid penalty for sin and purchased life – Romans 5: 17-21

- b. Man's part.
 - i. Conviction of sin – John 8:9.
 - ii. Contrition, sorrow for sin – Psalm 51:17
 - iii. Repentance – Acts 5:31.
 - iv. Belief in Christ. Confess and receive forgiveness – 1 John 1:9.
 - v. Forsaking sin – Isaiah 55:7
 - vi. Being converted – Acts 3:19.
 - vii. Accepting Christ as Savior and turning away from sin is new birth
– John 3:3-7. Baptism outward sign of inward experience – 1 Peter
1:22, 23.

IV. What experience follows the New Life in Christ?

- a. Past sins covered by Christ's righteousness – Romans 3: 24, 25.
- b. Righteousness of law to be fulfilled in life – Romans 8: 3, 4.
- c. Dead to sin, alive to righteousness – Romans 6: 3 – 8, 12 – 18.
- d. Christ dwells in heart, living His life again in human flesh – Eph. 3: 17;
Gal. 2:20.
- e. Can do all things through Christ. Phil. 4: 13.
- f. Faith the victory that overcomes – 1 John 5:4.
- g. Christ our Advocate in sin's emergency – 1 John 2: 1.

V. Conclusion and Appeal

- a. Christ delivers from the penalty and from the power of sin. He is an all-sufficient Savior. Have you accepted Him and do you know that you are saved?

LESSON V

Confession and Forgiveness

- I. Mankind's only Savior is Christ
 - a. Gulf of sin spanned by Christ's sacrifice – John 12: 32.
 - b. His righteousness alone atones for sin – Romans 3: 25; Isaiah 64: 6.
 - c. Sinner may come to God direct – Isaiah 1: 18.
 - d. No other mediator than Christ – 1 Timothy 2: 5; 1 John 2:1.
- II. The Way to God
 - a. Repentance not penance – Acts 2: 38.
 - i. Repentance precedes forgiveness of sin – Acts 5:31.
 - ii. Must always be sincere – Luke 18: 13.
 - iii. God's love leads to repentance – Romans 2: 4.
 - iv. Necessary for removal of sin – Acts 3: 19.
 - b. Confession to God.
 - i. Confess to God direct – Psalms 32: 5.
 - ii. Through Christ and Christ alone – Heb. 4: 15, 16.
 - iii. Faults to be confessed one to another – James 5: 16.
 - iv. Forgiveness promised on confession – 1 John 1: 9.

c. Justification necessary for forgiveness

- i. Justification is God's gift – 1 Peter 1: 18, 19.
- ii. By faith in Christ – Romans 5: 1.
- iii. Justification for sins that are past – Romans 3: 23 – 26.
- iv. Christ's atoning sacrifice offered once – Hebrews 9: 28.

III. Conversation and freedom from sin

- a. True conversations results in transformation of life – Psalm 32: 1, 2.
- b. Works of Satan destroyed by Christ – 1 John 3 – 8.
- c. Walking after the Spirit – Romans 8: 1, 2.
- d. Restored to God without works of penance – Psalm 51: 16, 17.

IV. Points of Truth summarized

- a. Conviction comes through God's Spirit.
- b. Repentance is godly sorrow for sin, without penance
- c. Intercession through Christ.
- d. Confession to God direct.
- e. Forgiveness pronounced by Christ
- f. Justification of God: no place for penance or indulgence
- g. Continual daily confession of sin.

LESSON VI

The Church and Spiritual Gifts

- I. Spiritual gifts given to the church by Christ at his ascension – Eph. 4: 4-8.
 - a. These gifts under the control of the Holy Spirit – 1 Cor. 12: 8, 11.
 - b. Benefits each member in the church – 1 Cor. 12: 7.
 - c. Gifts bring unity to the church as a whole – Eph. 4: 12, 13; 1 Cor. 12:25.
 - d. Gifts remain in the church until it reaches perfection and is ready for translation – Eph. 4:12, 13.
- II. Summary
 - a. The church is the body of Christ, a community of faith of which Christ himself is the head, and it derives its authority from Him.
 - b. God gives all members of His church spiritual gifts, which each member is to use in loving ministry for the good of the church and humanity.

APPENDIX B
QUESTIONNAIRE

QUESTIONNAIRE

This project relates specifically to the context, which is Ethan Temple Seventh-day Adventist Church in Dayton, Ohio. The following survey is to ascertain the opinion of the respondents to the following doctrinal statements given in a pre and post test format. The intent is to find out if any changes in attitude occurred after the treatment of a series of Bible lessons were taught. The statements were taken from the book *Seventh-day Adventist Believe. . . A Biblical Exposition of Fundamental Doctrines*, which states in the introduction that this volume may be viewed “as representative of the truth in Jesus that Seventh-day Adventist around the world cherish and proclaim.”

Statements

Please select ✓ the item that most closely reflects you or your opinion of the following statements.

Christianity is about having a relationship with the living God; therefore emphasis on teaching doctrine is irrelevant to my knowing God.

___ Strongly Agree; ___ Agree; ___ Unsure; ___ Disagree; ___ Strongly Disagree.

1. The Holy Scriptures, Old and New Testaments are the written Word of God, given by divine inspiration and are necessary for a knowledge of Salvation.

___ Strongly Agree; ___ Agree; ___ Unsure; ___ Disagree; ___ Strongly Disagree.

2. There is one God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. A unity of three co-eternal Persons.

___ Strongly Agree; ___ Agree; ___ Unsure; ___ Disagree; ___ Strongly Disagree.

3. God the eternal Son became flesh in Jesus Christ. He created all things, and through Him the character of God is revealed.

___ Strongly Agree; ___ Agree; ___ Unsure; ___ Disagree; ___ Strongly Disagree.

4. Jesus suffered and died voluntarily on the cross for my sins and in my place, was raised from the dead and ascended to minister in the heavenly Sanctuary in my behalf.

___ Strongly Agree; ___ Agree; ___ Unsure; ___ Disagree; ___ Strongly Disagree.

5. As one of the members of the Godhead, the Holy Spirit is a person; fully Divine and He played an active part with the Father and Son in the creation of the world.

___ Strongly Agree; ___ Agree; ___ Unsure; ___ Disagree; ___ Strongly Disagree.

6. God is the Creator of all things, and He has revealed in Scripture the account of His creative activity. He created the world in six days.

___ Strongly Agree; ___ Agree; ___ Unsure; ___ Disagree; ___ Strongly Disagree.

7. Man and woman were made in the image of God, with individuality, the power and freedom to choose and think. They were created for God's glory to love Him, and one another, and to care for their environment.

___ Strongly Agree; ___ Agree; ___ Unsure; ___ Disagree; ___ Strongly Disagree.

8. The resurrection of Christ proclaims God's triumph over evil, and for those who accept the atonement assures their final victory over sin and death.

___ Strongly Agree; ___ Agree; ___ Unsure; ___ Disagree; ___ Strongly Disagree.

9. The work of Salvation involves repentance, confession, forgiveness, justification and sanctification.

___ Strongly Agree; ___ Agree; ___ Unsure; ___ Disagree; ___ Strongly Disagree.

10. The Church is the body of Christ, a community of faith of which Christ himself is the Head and it derives its authority from Him.

___ Strongly Agree; ___ Agree; ___ Unsure; ___ Disagree; ___ Strongly Disagree.

11. In Christ we are a new creation and distinctions of race, culture, learning, nationality, and differences between male and female should not divide us.

___ Strongly Agree; ___ Agree; ___ Unsure; ___ Disagree; ___ Strongly Disagree.

12. Baptism is a symbol of our union with Christ. It is by immersion in water and it is an affirmation of faith in Jesus Christ.

___ Strongly Agree; ___ Agree; ___ Unsure; ___ Disagree; ___ Strongly Disagree.

13. God gives all members of His church spiritual gifts which each member is to use in loving ministry for the good of the church and humanity.

___ Strongly Agree; ___ Agree; ___ Unsure; ___ Disagree; ___ Strongly Disagree.

14. Marriage was divinely established in Eden and affirmed by Jesus to be a lifelong union between a man and a woman in loving companionship.

___ Strongly Agree; ___ Agree; ___ Unsure; ___ Disagree; ___ Strongly Disagree.

15. The Second Coming of Christ will be literal, personal, visible and worldwide.

___ Strongly Agree; ___ Agree; ___ Unsure; ___ Disagree; ___ Strongly Disagree.

16. Death is an unconscious state for all people. When Christ who is our life, comes, the resurrected righteous and the living righteous will be glorified and caught up to meet their Lord.

___ Strongly Agree; ___ Agree; ___ Unsure; ___ Disagree; ___ Strongly Disagree.

17. The millennium is the thousand years' reign of Christ, with His saints in heaven between the first and the second resurrections.

___ Strongly Agree; ___ Agree; ___ Unsure; ___ Disagree ___ Strongly Disagree.

18. The church is the community of believers who meet together for worship, fellowship, for instruction in the words and proclamation of the Gospel.

___ Strongly Agree; ___ Agree; ___ Unsure; ___ Disagree ___ Strongly Disagree.

19. The Lord's Supper is a participation in the symbols of the body and blood of Jesus as an expression of the faith in Him, our Lord and Savior.

___ Strongly Agree; ___ Agree; ___ Unsure; ___ Disagree; ___ Strongly Disagree.

APPENDIX C
PRE AND POST TEST DATA

Ethan Temple Seventh-day Adventist Church

Bible Study Questionnaire Pre-Test Results

Strongly Agree = SA; Agree = A; Unsure = U; Disagree = D; Strongly Disagree = SD

Questions	SA	A	U	D	SD
1. Christianity is about having a relationship with the living God; therefore emphasis on teaching doctrine is irrelevant to my knowing God.		3	1	7	1
2. The Holy Scriptures, Old and New Testaments are the written Word of God, given by divine inspiration and are necessary for a knowledge of Salvation.	14	2			
3. There is one God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. A unity of three co-eternal Persons.	15	1			
4. God the eternal Son became flesh in Jesus Christ. He created all things, and through Him the character of God is revealed		3	1		
5. Jesus suffered and died voluntarily on the cross for my sins and in my place, was raised from the dead and ascended to minister in the heavenly Sanctuary in my behalf.	12	4			
6. As one of the members of the Godhead, the Holy Spirit is a person; fully Divine and He played an active part with the Father and Son in the creation of the world.	12	1	1	2	
7. God is the Creator of all things, and He has revealed in Scripture the account of His creative activity. He created the world in six days.	13	2		1	
8. Man and woman were made in the image of God, with individuality, the power and freedom to choose and think. They were created for God's glory to love Him, and one another, and to care for their environment.	14	2			
9. The resurrection of Christ proclaims God's triumph over evil, and for those who accept the atonement assures their final victory over sin and death.	12	2	1	1	

Questions	SA	A	U	D	SD
10. The work of Salvation involves repentance, confession, forgiveness, justification and sanctification.	13	3			
11. The Church is the body of Christ, a community of faith of which Christ himself is the Head and it derives its authority from Him.	14	1	1		
12. In Christ we are a new creation and distinctions of race, culture, learning, nationality, and differences between male and female should not divide us.	14	1		1	
13. Baptism is a symbol of our union with Christ. It is by immersion in water and it is an affirmation of faith in Jesus Christ.	15	1			
14. God gives all members of His church spiritual gifts which each member is to use in loving ministry for the good of the church and humanity.	14	2			
15. Marriage was divinely established in Eden and affirmed by Jesus to be a lifelong union between a man and a woman in loving companionship.	14	1	1		
16. The Second Coming of Christ will be literal, personal, visible and worldwide.	14	2			
17. Death is an unconscious state for all people. When Christ who is our life, comes, the resurrected righteous and the living righteous will be glorified and caught up to meet their Lord.	14	1	1		
18. The millennium is the thousand years' reign of Christ, with His saints in heaven between the first and the second resurrections.	13	1	1	1	
19. The church is the community of believers who meet together for worship, fellowship, for instruction in the words and proclamation of the Gospel.	15	1			
20. The Lord's Supper is a participation in the symbols of the body and blood of Jesus as an expression of the faith in Him, our Lord and Savior	14	2			

Ethan Temple Seventh-day Adventist Church

Bible Study Questionnaire Post-Test

Strongly Agree = SA; Agree = A; Unsure = U; Disagree = D; Strongly Disagree = SD

Questions	SA	A	U	D	SD
1. Christianity is about having a relationship with the living God; therefore emphasis on teaching doctrine is irrelevant to my knowing God.		1		1	14
2. The Holy Scriptures, Old and New Testaments are the written Word of God, given by divine inspiration and are necessary for a knowledge of Salvation.	15	1			
3. There is one God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. A unity of three co-eternal Persons.	16				
4. God the eternal Son became flesh in Jesus Christ. He created all things, and through Him the character of God is revealed	15	1			
5. Jesus suffered and died voluntarily on the cross for my sins and in my place, was raised from the dead and ascended to minister in the heavenly Sanctuary in my behalf.	14	2			
6. As one of the members of the Godhead, the Holy Spirit is a person; fully Divine and He played an active part with the Father and Son in the creation of the world.	15	1			
7. God is the Creator of all things, and He has revealed in Scripture the account of His creative activity. He created the world in six days.	15	1			
8. Man and woman were made in the image of God, with individuality, the power and freedom to choose and think. They were created for God's glory to love Him, and one another, and to care for their environment.	15	1			
9. The resurrection of Christ proclaims God's triumph over evil, and for those who accept the atonement assures their final victory over sin and death.	15	1			

Questions	SA	A	U	D	SD
10. The work of Salvation involves repentance, confession, forgiveness, justification and sanctification.	15	1			
11. The Church is the body of Christ, a community of faith of which Christ himself is the Head and it derives its authority from Him.	15	1			
12. In Christ we are a new creation and distinctions of race, culture, learning, nationality, and differences between male and female should not divide us.	16				
13. Baptism is a symbol of our union with Christ. It is by immersion in water and it is an affirmation of faith in Jesus Christ.	16				
14. God gives all members of His church spiritual gifts which each member is to use in loving ministry for the good of the church and humanity.	15	1			
15. Marriage was divinely established in Eden and affirmed by Jesus to be a lifelong union between a man and a woman in loving companionship.	16				
16. The Second Coming of Christ will be literal, personal, visible and worldwide.	16				
17. Death is an unconscious state for all people. When Christ who is our life, comes, the resurrected righteous and the living righteous will be glorified and caught up to meet their Lord.	16				
18. The millennium is the thousand years' reign of Christ, with His saints in heaven between the first and the second resurrections.	15	1			
19. The church is the community of believers who meet together for worship, fellowship, for instruction in the words and proclamation of the Gospel.	16				
20. The Lord's Supper is a participation in the symbols of the body and blood of Jesus as an expression of the faith in Him, our Lord and Savior	15	1			

Ethan Temple Seventh-day Adventist Church

Bible Study Questionnaire Pre-Test/Post Test Results

Strongly Agree = SA; Agree = A; Unsure = U; Disagree = D; Strongly Disagree = SD
 Post-Test Results in parenthesis ()

Questions	SA	A	U	D	SD
1. Christianity is about having a relationship with the living God; therefore emphasis on teaching doctrine is irrelevant to my knowing God.	4 (0)	3 (0)	1	7 (2)	1 (14)
2. The Holy Scriptures, Old and New Testaments are the written Word of God, given by divine inspiration and are necessary for a knowledge of Salvation.	14 (15)	2 (1)			
3. There is one God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. A unity of three co-eternal Persons.	15 (16)	1 (0)			
4. God the eternal Son became flesh in Jesus Christ. He created all things, and through Him the character of God is revealed	12 (15)	3 (1)	1		
5. Jesus suffered and died voluntarily on the cross for my sins and in my place, was raised from the dead and ascended to minister in the heavenly Sanctuary in my behalf.	12 (14)	4 (2)			
6. As one of the members of the Godhead, the Holy Spirit is a person; fully Divine and He played an active part with the Father and Son in the creation of the world.	12 (15)	1 (1)	1	2	
7. God is the Creator of all things, and He has revealed in Scripture the account of His creative activity. He created the world in six days.	13 (15)	2 (1)		1	
8. Man and woman were made in the image of God, with individuality, the power and freedom to choose and think. They were created for God's glory to love Him, and one another, and to care for their environment.	14 (15)	2 (1)			
9. The resurrection of Christ proclaims God's triumph over evil, and for those who accept the atonement assures their final victory over sin and death.	12 (15)	2 (1)	1	1	

Questions	SA	A	U	D	SD
10. The work of Salvation involves repentance, confession, forgiveness, justification and sanctification.	13 (15)	3 (1)			
11. The Church is the body of Christ, a community of faith of which Christ himself is the Head and it derives its authority from Him.	14 (15)	1 (1)	1		
12. In Christ we are a new creation and distinctions of race, culture, learning, nationality, and differences between male and female should not divide us.	14 (16)	1		1	
13. Baptism is a symbol of our union with Christ. It is by immersion in water and it is an affirmation of faith in Jesus Christ.	15 (16)	1			
14. God gives all members of His church spiritual gifts which each member is to use in loving ministry for the good of the church and humanity.	14 (15)	2 (1)			
15. Marriage was divinely established in Eden and affirmed by Jesus to be a lifelong union between a man and a woman in loving companionship.	14 (16)	1	1		
16. The Second Coming of Christ will be literal, personal, visible and worldwide.	14 (16)	2			
17. Death is an unconscious state for all people. When Christ who is our life, comes, the resurrected righteous and the living righteous will be glorified and caught up to meet their Lord.	15 (16)	1			
18. The millennium is the thousand years' reign of Christ, with His saints in heaven between the first and the second resurrections.	13 (15)	1 (1)	1	1	
19. The church is the community of believers who meet together for worship, fellowship, for instruction in the words and proclamation of the Gospel.	15 (16)	1			
20. The Lord's Supper is a participation in the symbols of the body and blood of Jesus as an expression of the faith in Him, our Lord and Savior	14 (15)	2 (1)			

APPENDIX D

TABLES

TABLE 1

STATEMENT AND PERCENTAGE OF RESPONSES
TOTAL NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS – 16

Statement 1. Christianity is about having a relationship with the living God; therefore emphasis on teaching doctrine is irrelevant to my knowing God.	Pre Test		Post Test	
	Response	Percentage	Response	Percentage
Strongly Agree	4	25		
Agree	3	18.75		
Unsure	1	6.25		
Disagree	7	43.75	2	12.5
Strongly Disagree	1	6.25	14	87.5
Total Responses	16	100	16	100

TABLE 2

STATEMENT AND PERCENTAGE OF RESPONSES
TOTAL NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS – 16

Statement 2. The Holy Scriptures, Old and New Testaments are the written Word of God, given by divine inspiration and are necessary for a knowledge of Salvation.	Pre Test		Post Test	
	Response	Percentage	Response	Percentage
Strongly Agree	14	87.5	15	93.75
Agree	2	12.5	1	6.25
Unsure				
Disagree				
Strongly Disagree				
Total Responses	16	100	16	100

TABLE 3

STATEMENT AND PERCENTAGE OF RESPONSES
TOTAL NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS – 16

Statement 3. There is one God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. A unity of three co-eternal Persons.	Pre Test		Post Test	
	Response	Percentage	Response	Percentage
Strongly Agree	15	93.75	16	100
Agree	1	6.25		
Unsure				
Disagree				
Strongly Disagree				
Total Responses	16	100	16	100

TABLE 4

STATEMENT AND PERCENTAGE OF RESPONSES
TOTAL NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS – 16

Statement 4. God the eternal Son became flesh in Jesus Christ. He created all things, and through Him the character of God is revealed	Pre Test		Post Test	
	Response	Percentage	Response	Percentage
Strongly Agree	12	75	15	93.75
Agree	3	18.75	1	6.25
Unsure	1	6.25		
Disagree				
Strongly Disagree				
Total Responses	16	100	16	100

TABLE 5

**STATEMENT AND PERCENTAGE OF RESPONSES
TOTAL NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS – 16**

Statement 5. Jesus suffered and died voluntarily on the cross for my sins and in my place, was raised from the dead and ascended to minister in the heavenly Sanctuary in my behalf.	Pre Test		Post Test	
	Response	Percentage	Response	Percentage
Strongly Agree	12	75	14	87.5
Agree	4	25	2	12.5
Unsure				
Disagree				
Strongly Disagree				
Total Responses	16	100	16	100

TABLE 6

**STATEMENT AND PERCENTAGE OF RESPONSES
TOTAL NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS – 16**

Statement 6. As one of the members of the Godhead, the Holy Spirit is a person; fully Divine and He played an active part with the Father and Son in the creation of the world.	Pre Test		Post Test	
	Response	Percentage	Response	Percentage
Strongly Agree	12	75	15	93.75
Agree	1	6.25	1	6.25
Unsure	1	6.25		
Disagree	2	12.5		
Strongly Disagree				
Total Responses	16	100	16	100

TABLE 7

**STATEMENT AND PERCENTAGE OF RESPONSES
TOTAL NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS – 16**

Statement 7. God is the Creator of all things, and He has revealed in Scripture the account of His creative activity. He created the world in six days.	Pre Test		Post Test	
	Response	Percentage	Response	Percentage
Strongly Agree	13	81.25	15	93.75
Agree	2	12.5	1	6.25
Unsure				
Disagree	1	6.25		
Strongly Disagree				
Total Responses	16	100	16	100

TABLE 8

**STATEMENT AND PERCENTAGE OF RESPONSES
TOTAL NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS – 16**

Statement 8. Man and woman were made in the image of God, with individuality, the power and freedom to choose and think. They were created for God's glory to love Him, and one another, and to care for their environment.	Pre Test		Post Test	
	Response	Percentage	Response	Percentage
Strongly Agree	14	87.5	15	93.75
Agree	2	12.5	1	6.25
Unsure				
Disagree				
Strongly Disagree				
Total Responses	16	100	16	100

TABLE 9

**STATEMENT AND PERCENTAGE OF RESPONSES
TOTAL NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS – 16**

Statement 9. The resurrection of Christ proclaims God's triumph over evil, and for those who accept the atonement assures their final victory over sin and death.	Pre Test		Post Test	
	Response	Percentage	Response	Percentage
Strongly Agree	12	75	15	93.75
Agree	2	12.5	1	6.25
Unsure	1	6.25		
Disagree	1	6.25		
Strongly Disagree				
Total Responses	16	100	16	100

TABLE 10

**STATEMENT AND PERCENTAGE OF RESPONSES
TOTAL NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS – 16**

Statement 10. The work of Salvation involves repentance, confession, forgiveness, justification and sanctification.	Pre Test		Post Test	
	Response	Percentage	Response	Percentage
Strongly Agree	13	81.25	15	93.75
Agree	3	18.75	1	6.25
Unsure				
Disagree				
Strongly Disagree				
Total Responses	16	100	16	100

TABLE 11

**STATEMENT AND PERCENTAGE OF RESPONSES
TOTAL NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS – 16**

Statement 11. The Church is the body of Christ, a community of faith of which Christ himself is the Head and it derives its authority from Him.	Pre Test		Post Test	
	Response	Percentage	Response	Percentage
Strongly Agree	14	87.50	15	93.75
Agree	1	6.25	1	6.25
Unsure	1	6.25		
Disagree				
Strongly Disagree				
Responses	16	100	16	100

TABLE 12

**STATEMENT AND PERCENTAGE OF RESPONSES
TOTAL NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS – 16**

Statement 12. In Christ we are a new creation and distinctions of race, culture, learning, nationality, and differences between male and female should not divide us.	Pre Test		Post Test	
	Response	Percentage	Response	Percentage
Strongly Agree	14	87.50	16	100
Agree	1	6.25		
Unsure				
Disagree	1	6.25		
Strongly Disagree				
Total Responses	16	100	16	100

TABLE 13

**STATEMENT AND PERCENTAGE OF RESPONSES
TOTAL NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS – 16**

Statement 13. Baptism is a symbol of our union with Christ. It is by immersion in water and it is an affirmation of faith in Jesus Christ.	Pre Test		Post Test	
	Response	Percentage	Response	Percentage
Strongly Agree	15	93.75	16	100
Agree	1	6.25		
Unsure				
Disagree				
Strongly Disagree				
Total Responses	16	100	16	100

TABLE 14

**STATEMENT AND PERCENTAGE OF RESPONSES
TOTAL NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS – 16**

Statement 14. God gives all members of His church spiritual gifts which each member is to use in loving ministry for the good of the church and humanity.	Pre Test		Post Test	
	Response	Percentage	Response	Percentage
Strongly Agree	14	87.50	15	93.75
Agree	2	12.50	1	6.25
Unsure				
Disagree				
Strongly Disagree				
Total Responses	16	100	16	100

TABLE 15

**STATEMENT AND PERCENTAGE OF RESPONSES
TOTAL NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS – 16**

Statement 15. Marriage was divinely established in Eden and affirmed by Jesus to be a lifelong union between a man and a woman in loving companionship.	Pre Test		Post Test	
	Response	Percentage	Response	Percentage
Strongly Agree	14	87.50	16	100
Agree	1	6.25		
Unsure	1	6.25		
Disagree				
Strongly Disagree				
Total Responses	16	100	16	100

TABLE 16

**STATEMENT AND PERCENTAGE OF RESPONSES
TOTAL NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS – 16**

Statement 16. The Second Coming of Christ will be literal, personal, visible and worldwide.	Pre Test		Post Test	
	Response	Percentage	Response	Percentage
Strongly Agree	14	87.50	16	100
Agree	2	12.50		
Unsure				
Disagree				
Strongly Disagree				
Total Responses	16	100	16	100

TABLE 17

**STATEMENT AND PERCENTAGE OF RESPONSES
TOTAL NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS – 16**

Statement 17. Death is an unconscious state for all people. When Christ who is our life, comes, the resurrected righteous and the living righteous will be glorified and caught up to meet their Lord.	Pre Test		Post Test	
	Response	Percentage	Response	Percentage
Strongly Agree	15	93.75	16	100
Agree	1	6.25		
Unsure				
Disagree				
Strongly Disagree				
Total Responses	16	100	16	100

TABLE 18

**STATEMENT AND PERCENTAGE OF RESPONSES
TOTAL NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS – 16**

Statement 18. The millennium is the thousand years' reign of Christ, with His saints in heaven between the first and the second resurrections.	Pre Test		Post Test	
	Response	Percentage	Response	Percentage
Strongly Agree	13	81.25	15	93.75
Agree	1	6.25	1	6.25
Unsure	1	6.25		
Disagree	1	6.25		
Strongly Disagree				
Total Responses	16	100	16	100

TABLE 19

**STATEMENT AND PERCENTAGE OF RESPONSES
TOTAL NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS – 16**

Statement 19. The church is the community of believers who meet together for worship, fellowship, for instruction in the words and proclamation of the Gospel.	Pre Test		Post Test	
	Response	Percentage	Response	Percentage
Strongly Agree	15	93.75	16	100
Agree	1	6.25		
Unsure				
Disagree				
Strongly Disagree				
Total Responses	16	100	16	100

TABLE 20

**STATEMENT AND PERCENTAGE OF RESPONSES
TOTAL NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS – 16**

Statement 20. The Lord's Supper is a participation in the symbols of the body and blood of Jesus as an expression of the faith in Him, our Lord and Savior	Pre Test		Post Test	
	Response	Percentage	Response	Percentage
Strongly Agree	14	87.5	15	93.75
Agree	2	12.50	1	6.25
Unsure				
Disagree				
Strongly Disagree				
Total Responses	16	100	16	100

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